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Ce module fait partie d'une série de quatre qui a pour but de faciliter l'organisation de sessions de perfectionnement collectif pour les professeurs d'anglais, langue seconde, aux niveaux primaire et secondaire. Il présente des activités couvrant cinq jours de perfectionnement. La présentation de chacune de ces activités comprend des objectifs, des stratégies d'enseignement, des notes explicatives ainsi que des questions de discussion.

Type de document:

MODULE DE PERFECTIONNEMENT
COLLECTIF EN DIDACTIQUE
DE L'ANGLAIS LANGUE SECONDE

9170 955-A

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

MODULE 1

Workshop Leader's Manual

Direction générale des programmes
Direction de la formation du
personnel scolaire

May 1989

Language Acquisition

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Preface

The idea for the development of a set of in-service teacher training modules, of which this is one, was originally suggested to the ministère de l'Éducation by the two associations for second-language teachers of Quebec.

The modules are designed to facilitate the organization of in-service teacher-training workshops (sessions de perfectionnement collectif) which school boards periodically offer to their personnel as the need arises. It is hoped that these modules will allow school boards to prepare their in-service training within a clear and coherent framework of activities.

Each module is intended for a five-day session. The modules progress logically from language acquisition to evaluation of communicative competence. Particular emphasis has been placed on methodological issues in the teaching of English as a second language.

In principle, any consultant or teacher with a solid background in second-language pedagogy should be able to lead the workshops using these modules. A certain amount of preparation and careful reading beforehand will nonetheless be required. However, the need to seek out human or physical resources beyond the individual school board should be minimal.

In English as a second language, four modules are available:

Module 1	Language Acquisition
Module 2	Methodology I
Module 3	Methodology II
Module 4	Evaluation

The content of the modules was determined by a steering committee composed of representatives from the ministère de l'Éducation, the Association québécoise des enseignants de français langue seconde (AQEFLS) and the Société pour la promotion de l'anglais langue seconde au Québec (SPEAQ). This committee favoured a pragmatic and inductive procedure in the design of the module: through practical experience and concrete activities participants will be led to general principles and pedagogical know-how.

The modules were written by individuals who had both an extensive background in the particular subject, experience in teacher training and in the creation of pedagogical documents. A field test of each module was conducted with groups of teachers from both the primary and secondary levels of various school boards. As far as possible, the present version of the modules takes into account their comments and suggestions.

We hope that these modules provide a flexible and satisfactory means of organizing in-service training sessions for teachers of English as a second language and thereby contribute to an improvement in the quality of instruction they offer their students.

The Steering Committee

Acknowledgments

The design and development of these in-service teacher training modules would not have been possible without the co-operation of a number of individuals and institutions. We would particularly like to thank:

- **The authors**

Module 1	*Language Acquisition* **Patsy Lightbown** **Jude Rand** **Nina Spada**
Module 2	*Methodology I* **Louise Gascon**
Module 3	*Methodology II* **Thérèsa O'Farrell-Gagnon**
Module 4	*Evaluation* **Louise Gascon**

- **Those individuals** who graciously agreed to conduct the field tests of these Modules and their school boards who offered their full collaboration during the field tests:

Suzanne Guay
Commission scolaire Saint-Exupery
Commission scolaire Granby

Suzanne Roy
Commission scolaire
Des Chutes-de-la Chaudière

Jean-Pierre Jobidon
Commission scolaire Baie Comeau

Jacqueline Lord
Commision scolaire Pascal-Taché

- **The publishing companies and organizations** that generously granted us permission to reproduce extracts from their publications.

- **The Direction de la formation du personnel scolaire** which provided the funds for this project and which also provided technical and administrative support.

- The **Société pour la promotion de l'enseignement de l'anglais langue seconde au Québec** (SPEAQ) and the **Association québécoise des enseignants de français langue seconde (AQEFLS)**, which participated in all aspects of the project.

The Steering Committee

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Organization of the Module

• Duration and sequence

This module is intended as a unit; it should be given in its entirety and in the order in which it is presented. Each module has been divided into segments of one day each. However, some variations in timing may occur due to the background of the group to whom it is being presented.

While it is possible to give this module as one block of five days, it may be necessary to spread the module over a longer period of time. However, it is essential that Day 3 and Day 4 be grouped together.

• The workshop leader

It is recommended that the same person conduct the entire module. If this is impossible, it is essential that each of the workshop leaders involved have a thorough knowledge of the entire module and not only that segment for which they are responsible.

Similarly, it is essential that the workshop leader be completely at ease in the subject matter of the module and that he or she reads the entire module thoroughly before attempting to conduct the workshop.

• The participants

Considering the nature of the module as a unit, it is essential that the participants attend all sessions in sequence.

It is not necessary that all participants teach at the same level. The field test of this module demonstrated that having a group of teachers from both primary and secondary levels provided a rich and valuable forum for exchange.

• Conducting the workshop

In order that these modules achieve maximum effect, it is essential that the workshop leader has an excellent knowledge of the content of the module, its general organization and that of the individual days as well as the content and structure of each separate activity.

During the workshops, the leader should constantly refer to the present document and whenever necessary make appropriate changes. It is unwise to simply take all instructions and suggestions as immutable.

Preparation prior to the workshop is strongly suggested. Several activities require considerable manipulation of material; therefore, careful planning is essential.

• Activities

Each activity has:

- A summary description
- A procedure

The summary description contains:

- The title and number of the activity
- Its objective
- The suggested time
- References either to corresponding pages in the participants' workbook or to other readings
- Resources, that is, various materials required to conduct the workshops.

The procedure contains:

- Successive steps in conducting the activity, numbered in the left-hand margin
- Comments and suggestions are denoted by a boxed text and by the symbol ☞
- For Your Information sections contain theoretical or background information; they are written in italics and double-barred on the left.
- Answer Keys are provided for all activities done by participants, and are indicated by a framed page.

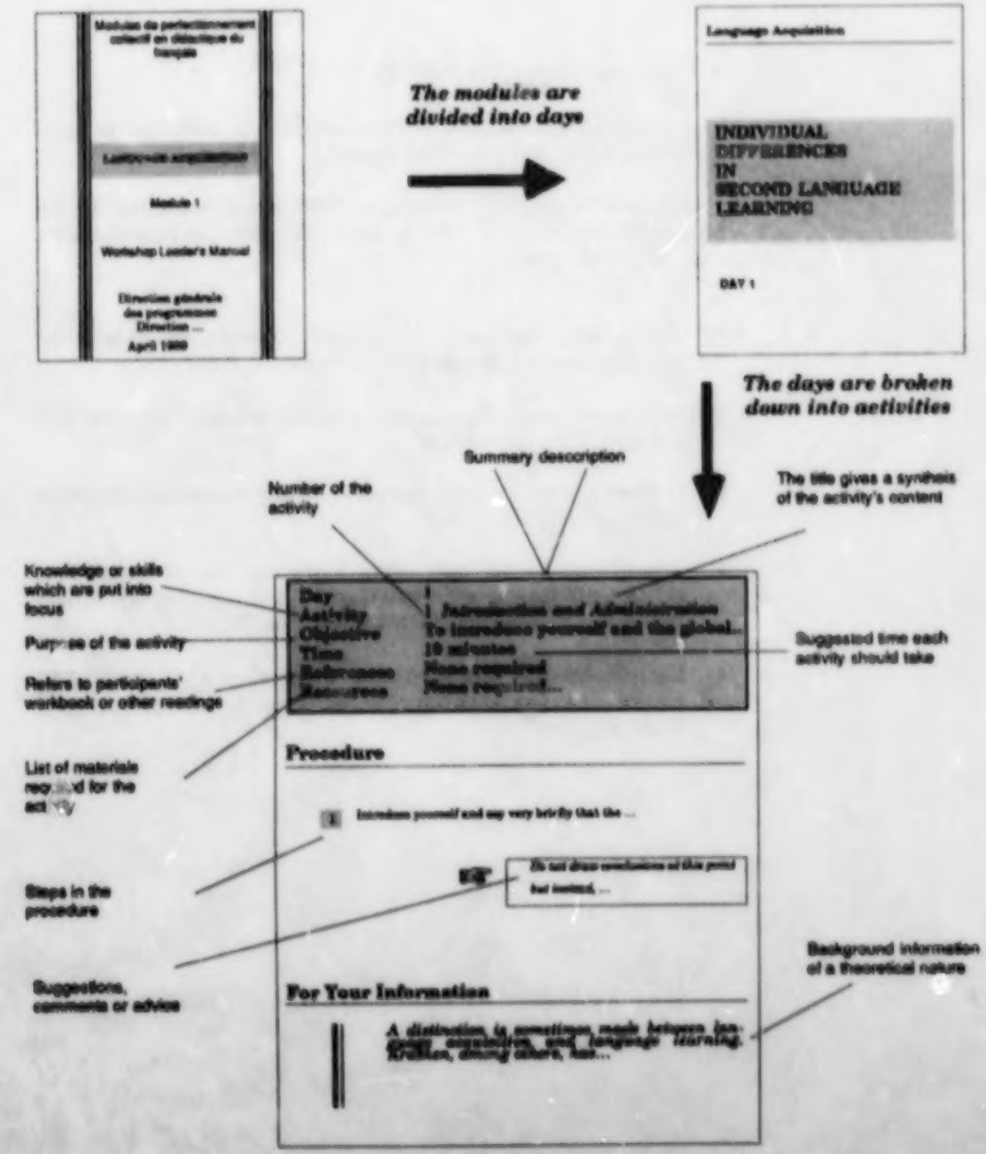
• Pre-workshop activity

The questions below should be distributed to the participants about two weeks before the workshop sessions.

Please think about the following questions in preparation for the Language Acquisition Workshop. Feel free to discuss your thoughts with your colleagues.

- Do you think that second language instruction should be introduced in Grade 1, Grade 4 or Secondary 1, Why?
- Is language acquisition largely a matter of habit formation and imitation? Why?/Why not?
- Is there a place for error correction in communicative language teaching? Why?/Why not?
- Should the teacher only select materials and activities that present the learner with language that is just slightly beyond this or her current ability? Why?/Why not?
- Do students reinforce each other's mistakes when working in groups, and if so, is this a good argument against group work? Why?/Why not?

The Module at a Glance


Modules de perfectionnement collectif en didactique du français
Module 1
Workshop Leader's Manual
Direction générale des programmes
Direction ...
April 1990
The modules are divided into days
Language Acquisition
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING
DAY 1
The days are broken down into activities
Summary description
Number of the activity
The title gives a synthesis of the activity's content
Knowledge or skills which are put into focus
Purpose of the activity
Refers to participants' workbook or other readings
List of materials required for the activity
Suggested time each activity should take
Day 1
Activity 1 Introduction and Administration
Objective To introduce yourself and the global...
Time 10 minutes
References None required
Resources None required...
Procedure
Introduce yourself and say very briefly that the ...
Do not draw conclusions at this point but instead, ...
Steps in the procedure
Suggestions, comments or advice
For Your Information
A distinction is sometimes made between language acquisition and language learning. Krashen, among others, has...
Background information of a theoretical nature

General Objective and Content of the Module

- **Objective**

To achieve a better understanding of the roles of teacher and learner in the second language acquisition process.

- **Content**

Day 1
Individual Differences in Second Language Learning

Day 2
Theories of Language Learning

Day 3
Learner Language and Developmental Stages in "Natural" and Classroom Environments

Day 4
Learner Language and Input in the Second Language Classroom

Day 5
Input and Interaction in the Second Language Classroom

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

DAY 1

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****Activity 2***
Objectives of the Module 18

Activity 3
Personal Second Language
Learning Experience 23

****Activity 4***
Individual Learning Strategies 25

****Activity 5***
Personal Characteristics of the
"Good Language Learner" 30

****Activity 6***
Individual Differences 33

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Activity 7
Opinion Poll on Age: Ballot 1 45

Activity 8
Age and Pronunciation 46

Activity 9
Beyond Pronunciation 51

Activity 10
Beyond Age 56

Activity 11
Age, Rate of Learning and Ultimate Success in Second Language Acquisition 57

Activity 12
Opinion Poll on Age: Ballot 2 62

Activity 13
Summary: Age and Other Factors 63

*** This indicates that an alternative procedure is provided.**

Day 1 at a Glance

1. Workshop leader introduces him or herself and the global aims of the workshop
2. Overview of objectives with two sample exercises gives taste of workshop
3. Workshop leader and volunteers telling about personal second language learning experiences illustrates individual differences and introduces ideas of *age* and *context*
4. Questionnaire focuses attention on wide variation in learning styles
5. Questionnaire shows that characteristics such as personality, aptitude, motivation and age affect language learning
6. Jigsaw reading reviews research on roles played by motivation, aptitude, personality and age
7. Ballot focuses attention on issue of age in second language acquisition
8. Taped adult speakers illustrate that age at beginning of second language acquisition has enormous effect on acquisition of pronunciation of a second language
9. Summary of Patkowski study shows that pronunciation is not only aspect affected by age at which the learner began second language acquisition; syntax is also age-dependent
10. Taped child second language speakers illustrates that age alone is not sufficient predictor of language learning success
11. Summary of Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle study shows that older learners can and do make considerable and rapid progress, given the right context
12. Second ballot measures the extent to which participants' opinions have been affected by activities 8-11 on age
13. Taped lecture concludes that age of beginning is not only predictor: different types of environments are more successful at different ages; time and total amount of instruction are crucial variables

Objectives of Day 1

- ***To become familiar with the individual differences influencing second language learning***
- ***To become familiar with the processes operating in both "natural" and classroom language acquisition; and with the characteristics of both "natural" and classroom language learning environments***

At the end of the session, the participants will:

- better understand the roles of teacher and learner in the second language acquisition process
- appreciate the similiarities and individual differences which may influence second language learning success
- recognize the fact that individuals employ different strategies to learn languages
- understand the influence of factors such as age, motivation, personality and aptitude on second language learning
- understand that staring young is a necessary but not a sufficent condition for total mastery of a second language

List of References and Resources

1. Chalk and blackboard; or overhead projector and acetates; or large writing tablet and felt markers
2. Workshop Leader's Manual
3. Participants' Workbook for Day 1
4. Cassette recorder and tape for Day 1

   Side B: #1/8: 11 minutes
   #1/10: 5 minutes
   #1/13: 6 minutes

5. Overhead projector and acetates (Activities 4, 5 and 11); erasable marker(s) for acetates
6. Ballots: two small pieces of paper per participant (Activities 7 and 12)

Required Reading for Workshop Leader

Krashen, S., Long, M. and Scarlella, R. (1979). "Age, rate and eventual attainment in second language acquisition", *TESOL Quarterly*, 13, 573-582. (Appendix 1)

Day	1	
Activity	1	***Introduction and Administration***
Objective	To introduce yourself and the global aims of the workshop	
Time	10 minutes	
References	Participants' Workbook, page 13	
Resources	None required	

Procedure

1 Introduce yourself (if necessary) and say very briefly that the aims of the workshop are to achieve a better understanding of the roles of teacher and learner in the language acquisition process.

2 Tell the participants that:

- as workshop leader you will manage the day-to-day administration of the module, provide resources and materials, coordinate activities, and answer questions,
- the module has been designed to be as varied and interactive as possible. They will be called upon to participate and to contribute their own experience and knowledge,
- there will be no homework assignments per se but after each unit one or two articles will be recommended, either to consolidate the material in the unit or to prepare for the next unit.

For Your Information

A distinction is sometimes made between language acquisition and language learning. Krashen, among others, has qualified learning *as the conscious attention to applying the rules of the code, and* acquisition *as the unconscious process by which language is learned. For the purposes of this module, no such distinction is made. The terms* learning *and* acquisition *are therefore used interchangeably.*

Day	1
Activity	2 ***Objectives of the Module***
Objective	To familiarize the participants with the objectives and layout of the module.
Time	20-30 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook page 14
Resources	None required

Procedure

1 Distribute the participants' workbooks and ask the participants to turn to the objectives of the module on page14 of their workbook.

2 Go through the objectives one at a time, providing additional commentary on each, as suggested after each objective in the Workshop Leader's Manual, and doing sample exercises where indicated. (Depending on the participants and/or on the time available, the two sample exercises may be omitted.)

General objectives

The participants will become familiar with:

A. **Individual differences influencing second language learning**

For example we'll be looking at questions like:
How does the learner's age affect second language acquisition? (SLA)
How important is motivation?
Does intelligence determine success in SLA?

B. **Theories of language learning, their evolution and their relation to language teaching methods.**

For Your Information

Behaviorist theories: *Language learning, like other kinds of learning, is based on imitation, selective reinforcement of successful behaviors, practice, and habit formation.*

Innatist theories: *Language acquisition is determined principally by what is inside the learner's mind. External factors serve only to "trigger" innate capacities.*

Interactionist theories: *Learner's mind is pre-disposed to acquire language but certain environmental experiences facilitate acquisition more than others.*

C. Learner language: the errors and developmental stages which reflect the processes operating in first and second language acquisition.

This is the first of two sample exercises which are meant to be very brief previews of the type of exercise which the participants will be doing in the workshop. As such, each exercise should take no longer than the five or ten minutes alloted.

Sample Exercise 1 (10 minutes) (Participants' Workbook page 15)

3 Explain that this is a sample of the type of exercise which they will be doing in the workshop.

4 Ask the participants to work in pairs or small groups.

5 Explain that the data are sentences which have been produced by both first and second language learners, but which are not distinguished within the corpus. Explain also that the data are divided into groups:

I: Questions and subordinate clauses
II: Errors in verb forms
III: Omissions and overgeneralizations

6 Ask the participants to look at the errors and see if they can distinguish first from second language utterances.

7 After the participants have gone through the sets, tell them that one could identify some of the errors as either first language or second language but that most of the errors could equally well be produced by first language or second language learners of English.

8 Make the important point that it is very difficult to distinguish first from second language errors. Draw the inference that first and second language acquisition are, at least in some ways, similar.

9 Explain that no "answers" are provided because the point is to emphasize that first language and second language errors are often very similar.

Sample Exercise 1: DATA

I. Questions and subordinate clauses

a) I don't know what's that.
b) What that is? What this is?
c) Why you don't like me?
d) Do I can have that one?
e) You want more milk?

II. Errors in verb forms

a) The car is go fast.
b) The little boy who erase the board is like Pinocchio.
c) There's two girls and two boys.
d) The teacher have a purple dress.
e) She wear a watch.
f) He don't want to have noise in the class.

III. Omissions and overgeneralizations

a) The teacher desk is in front.
b) I live far away. I live far than you.
c) Can he do it hisself?
d) He pulling the rope.
e) The childrens don't like that.
f) They have too many mouses in their house.
g) That one is mines.

D. **Processes and strategies in both "natural" and classroom language acquisition (e.g., generalization, imitation)**

Sample exercise 2: (5 minutes) (Participant's Workbook page 16)

8 Explain that the data are verb errors which have been produced by second language learners who have learned in quite different classroom environments. Some of the learners have had formal, structure-based second language instruction while some have had informal, communicative second language instruction. Allow the participants a minute or two to look at the errors but do not have them struggle with trying to distinguish between them. Point out that again, the two groups cannot be distinguished on the basis of the errors they make.

9 Conclude that as both groups make the same types of errors, formal instruction with its emphasis on structure may not prevent learners from making errors.

Sample Exercise 2: DATA

Verb errors

a) The boy have a green shirt on.
b) I have eleven years old.
c) He's takes a cookie.
d) Will you make him to stop that?
e) It's means the students can't go.
f) He's give the girl a book.
g) It's three hour and the school is finish.
h) That's finish.
i) The boy have a jacket black.
j) Is a funny picture.
k) They have another boy who is said ... to this girl ... shut up.

E. **Characteristics of "natural" and classroom learning environments (e.g., input, interaction, time factors, feedback on error).**

For example, we'll be looking at questions like:

- How is natural second language acquisition different from first language acquisition?
- How are classrooms different from so-called "natural" second language acquisition environments?
- Issues such as contextual clues, feedback on error, simplification of input, will be included.

F. **The distinction between input (language available in the environment) and intake (the input the learner is willing and able to receive)**

G. **Types of teacher/student and student/student interactions which have been shown to be effective in facilitating language acquisition**

For example, we will be examining teacher-centered versus learner-centered classroom transcripts for aspects like the amount of teacher talk compared to the amount of student talk, the number of clarification requests, the number of genuine questions, the number of errors and so on.

*Alternative Procedure

1-3 Follow the general procedure.

4 Depending on the audience, the two sample exercises may be omitted. However, it would be necessary to point out that errors made by second language learners or native speakers are often very difficult to distinguish. One example might suffice to illustrate this point.

Day	1
Activity	3 ***Personal Second Language Learning Experience***
Objective	To promote interaction and to illustrate the similarities and individual differences which may influence second language learning success
Time	25-30 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook page 18
Resources	None required

Procedure

1 Begin by describing your own second language acquisition (SLA) experience and proficiency. Tell the participants :

- How old you were when you started and under what circumstances
- What opportunities you've had to consolidate and practise your second language and
- How you'd describe your mastery in terms of the four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing

2 Then elicit similar descriptions from at least seven or eight of the participants.

3 Allow participants to volunteer their experiences and only ask leading questions if they seem to be having difficulty.

For example:

- How old were you when you first started to learn your second language?
- How would you rate your proficiency?
- Can you write as well as you can speak?
- Is your oral production as good as your comprehension?
- Are your listening skills better than your reading skills?

4 After the participants have volunteered their experiences, write the following on the board:

PROFICIENCY/ SKILLS	AGE OF LEARNING	CONTEXT FOR LEARNING

5 **Ask the participants to make inferences about the second language learning process based on their experiences and those of their colleagues.**

Anticipate and encourage inferences which focus on "individual" differences such as

- *Proficiency depends on age of learning and context for learning*
- *People learn when they have a need*
- *The younger the better, but learning can take place later and age is not an absolute determiner*
- *School is not the best environment*

Day	1
Activity	4 ***Individual Learning Strategies***
Objective	To become aware of the fact that individuals employ different strategies to learn languages
Time	30 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook page 19
Resources	Overhead Projector and Questionnaire Part I Acetates

Procedure

1 Ask the participants to turn to page 19 of their workbook, *Good Language Learner Questionnaire, Part* I. (See page 28, Workshop Leader's Manual.) This is a questionnaire probing the strategies used to learn languages. Bring the participants' attention to the fact that the language skills have been classified into five categories :

I. Learning the structure of the language
II. Developing receptive skills
III. Developing productive skills
IV. Developing vocabulary
V. Developing conversational skills

2 Ask participants to work individually numbering the strategies within each category according to how useful they would be for themselves as second language learners.

3 Specifically, instruct them to label the most useful strategy "√" and the least useful strategy "X" in each category.

4 When the participants have finished labeling the items, ask them to compare their responses to those of another or a few other participants.

☞ *Meanwhile, have the overhead projector and acetates of the Good Language Learner Questionnaire - Part I ready for a show of hands.*

5 When the participants have had a few minutes to compare their responses, ask for a show of hands.

For example:

- How many people think that using grammar books is the most useful strategy for learning the structure of language?
- How many people think that using grammar books is the least useful strategy for this category?
- Record these responses on the acetate (1X, 3X, etc., where the X sign stands for *least useful*).

Example

Learning the Structure of the Language

A 2	√	4X	Using grammar books, studying and memorizing
B 0	√	3X	Constant repetition, being drilled or ... etc.
C 1	√	3X	...
D 4	√	1X	...
E 4	√	0X	...

6 Continue doing this until all of the categories have been tabulated. Allow brief discussion following each category, paying particular attention to how identical items have been scored in different categories.

- For example
  Interacting with native speakers is an item which appears in all categories. Does it score similarly in all categories or is it considered to be more useful in one or a few categories than it is in others ? In addition, within each category, items contrast structured, systematic instruction and informal exposure to the language. Note how these items have been scored relative to similar items in other categories. For example, do the participants favour formal instruction in the productive skills but informal instruction in the receptive skills? Or vice versa? Or is there no apparent pattern?

7 Finally, explore and record the responses participants have under *Other*.

8 Conclude the discussion by drawing the inference that for an educated adult, some strategies are better than others, but that a wide variation in learning style exists.

*Alternative Procedure

1-4 Follow the general procedure.

5 Rather than using an acetate and overhead, the chalkboard would serve. Participants could be asked to form groups of four to share their opinions. A brief summary of the disparity of this group's results could be reported in plenary session.

6-8 Follow the general procedure.

GOOD LANGUAGE LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE

Part I

Strategies

If you wanted to learn a second or third language, how would you go about it? Travel? Study ? Some would say that travel in the foreign country or immersion in the other culture is the best possible way of learning a second language, so if given the choice between classroom study and travel, we would probably choose the travel option. But this is not always possible. What works for you ? Would you do best with firm guidance, or left to your own devices ? Would you prefer formal, systematic instruction or an informal exposure to the language ?

The following is a list of strategies commonly thought to aid in the acquisition of various aspects of a second language. Which ones suit you best ?

Answer this question by labelling the strategies within each category according to how useful they would be for you; i. e., label the most useful strategies "√"and the least useful strategies "X". Don't think too long about your answer. Give your first impression.

LEARNING THE STRUCTURE OF THE LANGUAGE

A ___ Using grammar books, studying and memorizing rules
B ___ Constant repetition, being drilled or drilling myself
C ___ Having a teacher who corrects my mistakes
D ___ Doing communicative activities in the classroom
E ___ Interacting with native speakers outside of the classroom
F ___ Other: ______

DEVELOPING RECEPTIVE SKILLS

A ___ Reading extensively on my own (newspapers, novels, magazines, etc.)
B ___ Reading ESL materials and doing reading comprehension exercises
C ___ Listening to radio, TV, etc.
D ___ Listening to conversations, dialogues and lectures, etc., specifically prepared for ESL instruction, and doing prescribed exercises and activities.
E ___ Interacting with native speakers outside class
F Other: ___

DEVELOPING PRODUCTIVE SKILLS

A —— Writing compositions, essays, letters, etc., and having them corrected by my teacher
B —— Writing letters and stories, etc., without correction
C —— Informally discussing selected topics, expressing my thoughts and opinions
D____ Doing debates, role-plays and activities which are like the situations in which I use English outside class
E ____ Memorizing and reciting dialogues
F ____ Doing pronunciation exercises in a language lab
G____ Interacting with native speakers outside class
H____ Practising with classmates; i. e., practising with other non-native speakers of English
I ____ Other: —

DEVELOPING VOCABULARY

A____ Using a bilingual dictionary
B____ Using a unilingual dictionary
C____ Using no dictionary — guessing from context
D____ Keeping vocabulary lists and memorizing definitions
E____ Reading extensively on my own, with a dictionary
F —— Reading extensively on my own, without a dictionary
G—— Interacting with native speakers
H____ Other: —

DEVELOPING CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS

A ____ Learning about the social and cultural rules (e. g., politeness forms, how to interrupt, disagree)
B ____ Practising with classmates; i. e., practising with other non-native speakers of English
C ____ Interacting with native speakers outside class
D—— Doing assignments which necessitate contact with native speakers (e. g., getting information over the phone)
E ____ Other: —

Day	1
Activity	5 ***Personal Characteristics of the "Good Language Learner"***
Objective	To become aware of the individual characteristics which contribute to language learning success
Time	20-25 minutes
References	Workbook, page 21
Resources	Overhead projector and Questionnaire II acetate

Procedure

1. Ask participants to turn to page 21 of their workbook, *Good Language Learner Questionnaire Part II*. (See page 32, Workshop Leader's Manual. This questionnaire probes the personal characteristics of a good language learner.)

2. Point out that it has been suggested that in addition to strategies and good study habits, there are individual characteristics that make some people more successful at language learning than others.

3. Ask participants to work individually labelling:
   - the characteristics most likely to contribute to success in learning ("√")
   - the characteristics least likely to contribute to success in learning ("X")

4. Give participants enough time (5-10 minutes) to do this individually.

5. Then ask for a show of hands and establish which five are considered to be the most *predictive* and which five are least predictive. Record responses on the acetate.

6. Once the responses have been recorded, point out that all of the characteristics listed can be classified into four main categories:

   Motivation
   Aptitude
   Age
   Personality

but that many of the characteristics cannot be assigned exclusively to one category and there is a considerable amount of overlap.

- For example
  Is willing to make mistakes can fall under *personality* or *motivation* if the learner is willing to make mistakes in order to get the message across.

7 Conclude that these are the four main characteristics which affect language learning, and that the effects of these four characteristics on classroom learning will be the focus of the following activities.

*Alternative Procedure

1-2 Follow the general procedure.

3 Write the following main categories on the board:

PERSONALITY
MOTIVATION
APTITUDE
AGE

4 Ask the participants which characteristic they consider to be the most useful. Allow discussion

5 Follow general procedure 7

GOOD LANGUAGE LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE

Part II

Personal Characteristics

It seems that some people have a much easier time of learning languages than others. Some children can string together 5-, 6- and 7-word sentences at the same time that other children are just beginning to label items in their immediate environment. In the same L2 classroom, some students progress rapidly through the initial stages of a new language while others struggle along making very slow progress. Are there personal characteristics that make one learner more successful than the other, and if so, what are they ?

The following is a list of some of the characteristics commonly thought to contribute to successful language learning. Again, label the characteristics according to how likely they are to contribute to success; i.e., label the characteristics most likely to contribute to success "√" and the characteristics least likely to contribute to success in learning "X".

A good language learner:

A ___ begins learning in childhood
B ___ has an above-average I.Q.
C ___ has good academic skills
D ___ is willing to make mistakes
E ___ practises
F ___ tries to get a message across even if specific language knowledge is lacking
G ___ constantly looks for patterns in the language
H ___ analyses his or her own speech and that of others
I ___ pays attention to whether what he or she has said is grammatically correct
J ___ tries to guess meaning even when not all of the words are familiar
K ___ ernjoys grammar exercises
L ___ has a good self-image and lots of confidence

Day	1
Activity	6 ***Individual Differences***
Objective	To become familiar with the roles motivation, aptitude, personality and age play in second language learning
Time	45-60 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook page 22
Resources	None required

Procedure

1 Ask participants to turn to page 23 of their workbook, *Motivation and Attitude*. Explain that the text is a brief summary of aspects of motivation thought to be most important for classroom learning and instruction in a second language. Ask the participants to read the text.

2 Allow ten minutes for the reading. When the participants have finished reading the text, discuss different ways of improving motivation and attitude by asking participants to make practical suggestions.

For example:

- Show students great francophones who speak or spoke English fluently, e.g., René Lévesque, Pierre Trudeau, René Simard
- Show personal enthusiasm for the language
- Discuss eminent value of the second language

3 Ask the participants to read and discuss the questions on page 25 of their workbook:

Pre-study Questions

- Does having an extroverted personality really help when learning a second language? If so, in what ways?
- Is there a special kind of knowledge which some people have that enables them to learn languages more quickly than others?
- Does a certain level of intelligence make it easier to learn languages?
- Does learning a language when one is older make it more difficult?
- Can individual learner characteristics such as these be identified, isolated and measured?

4 Point out that the purpose of this activity is to discuss some of these questions by focusing on four individual characteristics of learners: age, aptitude, personality and motivation. This will be done by reviewing some of the findings of studies which have been carried out to examine the effects of these differences on second language learning.

5 Ask the participants to form groups of five. Ask them to turn to the text on page 26 of their workbooks, *Individual Differences*. Explain that the text has been divided into five parts:

I. How the research is done/Difficulties with the research
II. Intelligence/Aptitude
III. Personality characteristics
IV. Age
V. Motivation/Conclusions

6 Ask participants to assign one of the texts to each group member. Each member should then present his or her section to the others. Point out that a worksheet for note-taking has been provided in their workbooks.

For Your Information

Aptitude is defined as a set of specific cognitive abilities which are needed to learn second languages.

Intelligence is defined as a general academic or reasoning ability.

7 When all of the groups have finished, allow a few minutes for discussion and questions.

8 Conclude that although we may have strong intuitions about the effects of these individual characteristics on language learning, thusfar the research is not very conclusive.

Practically speaking, however, teachers of second languages must understand the complex interaction of these factors and accept that while they have little control over external variables, they should be attempting to affect a positive attitude toward in-class activities.

Motivation and Attitude

Motivation in second language learning is a complex phenomenon which can be defined in terms of two things: the learner's communicative need and his or her attitudes toward the second language community. A learner's degree of motivation is a function of his or her overall goal and / or his or her orientation toward the target culture. If a learner needs to speak the second language in a wide range of social situations or to fulfill professional ambitions, he or she will perceive the communicative value of the second language and will therefore be motivated to acquire proficiency in it. Likewise, if the learner has favorable attitudes toward the speakers of the language he or she is learning, he or she will desire more contact with them. Additionally, if we consider that an individual's identity is closely linked with the way he or shes peaks, it follows that when he or she speaks a new language he or she is adopting some of the identity markers of another cultural group. Depending on the learner's attitudes then, learning a second language can be a source of enrichment or a source of resentment. If the speaker's only reason for learning the second language is external pressure, his or her internal motivation may be minimal and his or her general attitude toward learning may be negative.

One factor which often affects motivation is the social dynamic or power relationship between the languages. That is, members of a minority group may have different attitudes and motivation when learning the language of a majority group than those of majority group members learning a minority language. The exact effect on attitudes and motivation is not always predictable. Nevertheless, the fact that languages exist in social contexts cannot be overlooked when we consider how learners will react toward learning a second language. This is true even of children learning a second language.

The Quebec situation is unique in that each of the two major language groups is both a majority and a minority at the same time. Francophones are a majority in Quebec but a minority in the greater North American context. Anglophones are a minority in Quebec but a majority in the greater North American context. And both languages are major world languages. Thus, due to this unique combination of circumstances and due to the history of political relations between the French and the English in Quebec, some second language learners are likely to have quite strong feelings which may affect their motivation to learn the second language.

But what does this mean for the teacher of second languages in Quebec classrooms? What can a teacher do if a learner resents having to learn English or French and has little intrinsic motivation to do so ?

First of all, it is clear that the two sources of motivation, a strong external need (for example, for purposes of employment) and a favorable attitude toward the target

culture, do not exclude each other. Most learners are motivated by a mixture of the two. Thus, one of the teacher's tasks is to design lessons which enhance the image of the second language community. This can be done by providing the learners with activities which bring the learners into closer contact with the culture, on the premise that, contrary to the old saying "familiarity breeds contempt", familiarity, in fact, breeds interest and tolerance. But more importantly, the classroom should provide opportunities for success in the second language because nothing succeeds like success. The important part of classroom motivation lies in the classroom setting itself and not in some long-range goal to learn the language, especially for primary and early secondary learners. It is the immediate need to express an idea and the pleasure experienced when this is done that motivates second language learning.

What is significant here is that it is motivation which depends on immediate goals, such as completing a task or communicating some real need or meaning, that is most amenable to influence by the teacher. Motivation can be developed by careful selection of activities that create opportunities for success in the classroom and which foster intrinsic interest. Especially at the primary school level, long-term motivation plays little part. And even at the secondary level where discussion of future job prospects and travel to other parts of the world are relevant and motivating, progress is influenced by a need to communicate here and now.

* * *

Individual Differences

The purpose of this activity is to discuss some of these questions by focussing on four individual characteristics of learners: age, aptitude, personality and motivation. We will discuss how these factors have been investigated and look at some of the results of studies which have examined relationships between age, aptitude, personality characteristics, motivation and second language learning. We will also discuss some of the problems involved in carrying out research of this type.

Part I: How the Research is done and Difficulties with the Research

Perhaps the best way to begin our discussion is to describe in general terms how research which has investigated the influence of learner characteristics on second language learning has been carried out. Typically, when researchers are interested in finding out whether an individual factor such as motivation, for example, affects second language learning, they proceed in the following manner. First, a group of learners is selected for the study. Second, they are given a test to measure their second language proficiency. Third, they are given a test to measure the personal characteristic being studied (in this case, a motivation questionnaire). Finally, both tests are scored and the researcher investigates (usually in a statistical manner) whether a learner with a high score on the proficiency test is also more likely to have a high score on the motivation measure. If this is the case, the researcher may claim that a high level of motivation is related to success in language learning. A similar procedure can be used to measure the effects of intelligence or certain personality characteristics on second language learning, using an I. Q. test for example, in the first case and a personality measure in the second.

Although this procedure seems rather straightforward, there are several difficulties with it. The first problem is related to the fact that it is not possible to directly observe and measure qualities such as aptitude, motivation, extroversion, or even "intelligence" These are just labels for an entire range of behaviors and characteristics. Furthermore, because characteristics such as these are not independent, it will come as no surprise to learn that different researchers have often used the same labels to describe different sets of behavioral traits. Let's continue with our example of the effects of motivation on second language proficiency to elaborate this point. Typically, in motivation questionnaires, learners are asked whether they willingly seek out opportunities to use their second language with native speakers and if so, how often they do this. The assumption behind such a question is that if learners respond by saying that they often seek out opportunities to interact with speakers of the second language, that they are highly motivated to learn. Although this assumption seems reasonable, it creates *problems, because if a learner responds by saying yes to this question, it not only suggests that the learner is highly motivated, but also that the learner is receiving more opportunities for language practice in informal contexts. Because it is impossible to separate these two factors (i. e. willingness to interact and opportunities to interact) and many others related to personal characteristics of the learner, many researchers have been seriously criticized for attempting to present these factors as independent features.*

Another problem which makes it difficult to reach conclusions about relationships between individual learner characteristics and second language learning is related to how language proficiency is defined and measured. As we know, language proficiency can be measured in many different ways. For example, we can use a test of reading comprehension, a multiple choice grammar test, students' grades in class or a test of oral fluency skills as a measure of proficiency. However, we can not say that these tests measure the same aspects of language proficiency. This makes it difficult for researchers to reach firm conclusions about what factors lead to greater proficiency. It may be useful once again to refer to the personal factor of motivation to illustrate this point further. It may happen (and it often does) that while one study reports that learners with a higher level of motivation are more successful language learners than others, another study may find that highly motivated learners do not perform any better on a proficiency test than learners with much less motivation to learn the second language. A possible explanation for these different findings is that the language proficiency tests in the two studies were not measuring the same kind of knowledge. That is , it is possible the highly motivated learners in the first study were found to be more successful because the proficiency test measured their oral communication skills,whereas in the second study highly motivated learners were not found to be more successful because the test was primarily a measure of grammatical knowledge. What conflicting results such as these suggest is that high levels of motivation to learn a second language may be more related to certain aspects of language proficiency than others.

There are other problems associated with this line of research, but before we discuss them further, let's have a look at the findings of some of the studies which have investigated the four individual learner characteristics we are considering in this activity. We will begin with intelligence and aptitude as factors in second language learning.

Part II: Intelligence/Aptitude

It has been argued that learning a second language in a classroom setting involves two kinds of knowledge: intelligence and aptitude. Intelligence which is described as a general academic or reasoning ability, (often referred to as the g factor), is involved in the learning of other school subjects as well as language learning. Aptitude, however, is described as a set of specific cognitive abilities which are needed to learn second languages. Let's consider intelligence first.

- ***Intelligence***

A link between intelligence and second language learning has been found by several researchers. Over the years, many studies using different I. Q. tests and different methods of assessing language learning have found that intelligence levels were a good means of predicting how successful a learner would be at language learning. Furthermore, some recent studies have shown that intelligence may be more strongly related to certain kinds of second language abilities than others. For example, in a study with French immersion children in Montreal, it was found that while intelligence was related to the development of French second language reading, grammar and vocabulary, it was unrelated to oral productive skills. Similar findings have been reported in other studies where intelligence was highly related to proficiency in reading, dictation and writing but not in listening comprehension and free oral production. What these findings suggest is that intelligence seems to be more related to those second language skills which are used in the formal study of a language, (i. e. reading, language analysis, writing, vocabulary study), but that intelligence is much less likely to influence the way in which oral communication skills are developed. Therefore, intelligence seems to be a strong factor when it comes to learning second languages in classrooms, particularly if the instruction is formal. When the classroom instruction is less formal, however, (i. e. one which is more communicative), intelligence may play a lesser role. This may explain why immersion programs are successful with learners who have a wide range of abilities.

- ***Aptitude***

Although defining intelligence is problematic, aptitude is even more difficult to define. This factor has been investigated most intensively by researchers who are interested in developing tests which can predict how successful a language learner will be before taking a second language course. The two most widely known aptitude tests both measure 1) the ability to identify and memorize new sounds; 2) the ability to understand how words function grammatically in sentences; 3) the ability to figure out grammatical rules from language samples. It is thought that if learners have these abilities, they will be more successful language learners.

The relationship between aptitude and language learning has been measured in terms of the proficiency levels achieved by different classroom learners. The usual procedure is to obtain scores on an aptitude test and scores on a language proficiency measure, (i. e. teachers' class grades or a language test). The two sets of scores are statistically correlated — in other words, the scores on the aptitude test are compared with the scores on the language proficiency measure to see if students with high scores on one of the measures are the same students with high scores on the other.

If it turns out that students with high aptitude scores are the ones with high proficiency scores, then the researcher may claim that there is a strong relationship between aptitude and proficiency.

Although there have been a number of studies examining this factor, the results are in no way conclusive. One of the most serious problems is that it is not clear what the abilities are that are thought to constitute aptitude. That is, many of the behaviors associated with it may be just as easily associated with another learner characteristic such as personality or general intelligence.

We will now turn our attention to some of the different personality characteristics which have been examined in relationship to second language learning.

Part III: Personality characteristics

A number of personality characteristics have been proposed as likely to affect second language learning. And although these proposals are supported by observation and intuition, it has not been easy to demonstrate their effects on second language learning in empirical studies. What has often happened is that different studies measuring the same personality characteristic get different results. For example, as mentioned in the introduction, it is often suggested that an extroverted person is well suited to language learning. However, studies which have been carried out to examine this particular personality trait do not always support this conclusion. Although some studies have found that success in language learning is highly related to learners' scores on some traits often associated with extroversion such as assertiveness and adventuresomeness, others have found that successful language learners did not get high scores on tests of extroversion.

Another aspect of personality which has been studied is inhibition. It has been suggested that inhibition discourages risk-taking, which is necessary for progress in language learning. Some have also argued that this is a particular problem for adolescents, who are more self-conscious than younger learners. A well known set of studies which found support for the claim that inhibition is a negative force in language learning involve an analysis of the effects of small doses of alcohol on pronunciation. In these studies, subjects who received small doses of alcohol did better on pronunciation tests than those who did not drink any alcohol. While results such as these are interesting, (as well as somewhat amusing), they are not convincing, since experiments such as these are far removed from the reality of the classroom situation. We may also note, in passing, that when larger doses of alcohol were administered, pronunciation rapidly deteriorated.

Several other personality characteristics such as self-esteem, empathy, dominance, talkativeness, responsiveness, etc., have been studied. However, in general, the available research does not show a clearly defined effect of personality on second language acquisition. And, as indicated earlier, the major difficulty in investigating personality characteristics is that of identification and measurement. Another explanation which has been offered for the mixed findings of personality studies is that personality variables may be a major factor only in the acquisition of communicative competence. One researcher has suggested that the confused picture *of the research on personality factors can be clarified if a distinction is made between studies that measure* natural communicative ability *and studies that measure* linguistic task language. *Personality variables seem to be consistently related to the former, but not to the latter.*

Despite the inconclusive results to date and the problems involved in carrying out research in the area of personality characteristics, many people believe that personality will be shown to have an important influence on success in language learning. This relationship will probably be a complex one, however, in that it is probably not personality alone, but the way in which it combines with other factors that contributes to second language learning.

Part IV: Age

In discussions of individual differences in second language learning, age is the factor which has been most frequently considered. This is not at all surprising when one considers that age, unlike most other learner characteristics, is the most easily measured.

Because we will be discussing the issue of age in more detail later on in this unit, only a very brief summary of the general findings on age and second language learning will be discussed here.

It is almost a universal belief that children learn languages better than adults. This belief is based on countless observations of children from immigrant families who learn the language of a new community with native-like fluency, whereas the parents rarely achieve such high levels of competence. The most common explanation for these observations is that there is a critical period *for learning languages during which the brain is flexible and therefore permits language learning to occur easily. Since this period is thought to end somewhere around puberty, adolescents and adults are no longer able to call upon these natural learning capacities and therefore have to learn languages in a more formal and somewhat artificial manner.*

However, this critical period hypothesis *has been called into serious question in recent years from several different points of view. In terms of the neurological research in this area, it has not been demonstrated that changes take place in the brain at the onset of puberty. Furthermore, there are countless examples of older learners (adolescents and adults) who have reached high levels of proficiency in a second language. One of the difficulties in comparing the second language learning ability of children and adults is that the conditions for language learning are often very different. Younger learners usually have more time, more attention, and more opportunities for communicative use. Interestingly, however, in some studies which have investigated the second language development of older and younger learners in similar circumstances, it has been found that older learners learn more efficiently than younger learners. We will discuss more of the details concerning research on age and second language learning later in this module. We will now return to our* *discussion of the effects of motivation on second language learning and conclude this lecture on individual characteristics.*

Part V: Motivation and Conclusions

Since we have just read about the role of motivation and attitudes in second language learning and discussed a realistic approach motivating learners in Quebec classrooms, we do not need to spend much more time on it here.

A great deal of research investigating the role of attitudes and motivation in second language learning has been carried out and the overall findings indicate that they have a positive influence on second language learning. But, unfortunately, the research can not indicate precisely how motivation affects learning. That is , in studies where high correlations between motivation and language proficiency are found, we know only that there is a relationship between the two — we do not know the direction of this relationship. That is, we do not know whether it is the motivation that produces successful learning or successful learning that enhances motivation. In other words, are learners more highly motivated because they are successful learners or are they successful because they are highly motivated ? Clearly, these relationships are complex and future research will probably demonstrate that it is not motivation alone that determines whether second language learning will be successful, but rather, that a cluster of interrelated factors combine in complex ways to affect success or lack of success in second language learning.

- ***Conclusions***

In this text we have looked at the ways in which aptitude, motivation, personality characteristics and age have been found to influence second language learning. We have learned that the study of individual learner variables is not easy and that the results of research are not entirely satisfactory. This is partly because of the lack of a clear definition and measurement of the individual characteristics. It is also due to the fact that these learner characteristics are not independent of each other. At several points in this lecture, it was pointed out that these learner variables interact in complex ways. So far, researchers know very little about the nature of these complex interactions. Therefore, we are still very far away from making precise predictions about how a particular individual's characteristics will permit us to predict whether he or she will be a successful second language learner.

❑❑❑

Individual Differences

I. How research on individual characteristics is done

Difficulties with this research

II. Intelligence

Aptitude

III. Personality characteristics

IV. Age

V. Motivation

Conclusions

*Alternate Procedure

1-4 Follow general procedure.

5 Assign the text as take-home reading.

6 Follow general procedure 6 above.

Day	1
Activity	7 ***Opinion Poll on Age: Ballot 1***
Objective	To focus attention on the age issue in second language acquisition
Time	5 min
References	Participants' Workbook, page 33
Resources	One ballot (small blank piece of paper) per participant, pens or pencils

Procedure

1 Distribute the ballots, one per participant, telling participants that they'll be voting on a question related to age and second language acquisition.

Write the following question on the board and ask participants to vote by writing 1, 4 or secondary 1 on a piece of paper. Ask participants to refrain from discussion at this point.

- *IS IT BETTER TO START SECOND LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN GRADE 1, GRADE 4 OR SECONDARY 1?*

2 Pick up the ballots and when you have a chance, tally the responses. Hold on to the results until the end of the day. Again, say nothing and hold off discussion at this point.

*Alternative Procedure

You may simply give the question orally, then ask for a show of hands and record the tally in order to compare with the next ballot.

Day	1
Activity	8 *Age and Pronunciation*
Objective	To demonstrate the relationship between age and pronunciation in second language acquisition
Time	15 min
References	Participants' Workbook, page 34
Resources	Tape #2/8, Pronunciation Experiment

Procedure

1 Introduce activity by asking participants if they think they could guess the approximate age at which a person began to learn his or her second language just by listening to him or her speak. Use examples such as:

- *How old was Ed Broadbent or John Turner when he learned French?*
or
- *How old was Robert Bourrassa when he learned English?*

2 Allow a few minutes of discussion, acknowledging participants' contributions.

3 Explain that they will be listening to a tape of speakers reading a 30-second passage from *Cinderella* and/or *Cendrillon*. Point out that the texts are reprinted on page 35 of their workbook and that they can take a minute or two to look them over. If they wish, they can read along as they listen to the speakers.

4 Explain that some of the speakers are reading in their first language, e. g., an anglophone reading *Cinderella*, and some are reading in their second language, e. g., an anglophone reading *Cendrillon* or a francophone reading *Cinderella*. Some speakers were recorded in both their first and their second languages. The object of the exercise is to guess whether the speaker is a native speaker of the language he/she is reading, or a non-native speaker; and if a non-native speaker, how old he/she was when he/she learned to speak his/her second language.

5 Play Speaker No. 1. Stop the tape and elicit the participants' responses to Speaker No. 1. Briefly discuss why they responded as they did. Then read the biographical information in Workshop Leader's Manual, page 49 (actual age and second language learning experience) for Speaker No. 1. Allow some discussion.

6 Proceed to Speaker No. 2, repeating the procedure for four or five more speakers. (We recommend speakers 1,2,3 *Cendrillon*, and speakers 9,10,11 *Cinderella*).

> *Please note that there are eleven speakers, both on the tape and in the biographical information, but that we recommend that you only do six speakers. Speaker numbers 1, 2, 3, 9, 10 and 11 are the speakers that illustrate best that age and context play a large part in the acquisition of a native-like accent.*
>
> *Additionally, please note that it is not necessary to play the whole reading for each speaker. The first few sentences of each are adequate to give the participants an idea of the speaker's mastery.*

7 Conclude that for adults learning a second language, native-like accent is almost never achieved.

8 Ask the question:

- *SO, DOES THAT MEAN THAT IT IS BETTER TO START AS YOUNG AS POSSSIBLE ?*

9 Allow up to 5 minutes for discussion and conclude by acknowledging the various issues which surface. Clearly age at the beginning of second language acquisition has an enormous effect on acquisition of pronunciation but is it a factor for the other aspects of language development? Are there other equally important or even more important factors influencing second language acquisition? Ask participants to keep thinking about the question and tell then that it will come up again.

CENDRILLON

Il était une fois un gentilhomme qui épousa en secondes noces une femme égoïste et fière. Elle avait deux filles qui lui ressemblaient en tous points. Le mari, de son côté, avait une fille aussi bonne que belle. Les noces ne furent pas plus tôt célébrées que la belle-mère laissa éclater sa mauvaise humeur. Elle chargea sa belle-fille des pires besognes et l'envoya coucher dans un grenier, sur une paillasse. La pauvre enfant supportait cela avec courage et, lorsqu'elle avait terminé son ouvrage, elle allait s'asseoir au coin de la cheminée, auprès des cendres, ce qui lui avait valu le surnom de Cendrillon.

CINDERELLA

Once upon a time the wife of a certain rich man fell very ill, and as she felt her end drawing nigh she called her only daughter to her bedside and said, "My dear child, be pious and good, and then the good God will always protect you, and I will look down upon you from heaven and think of you." Soon afterwards she closed her eyes and died. Every day the maiden went to her mother's grave and wept over it, and she continued to be good and pious; but when the winter came, the snow made a white covering over the grave, and in the spring-time, when the sun had withdrawn this covering, the father took to himself another wife.

Worksheet Answer Key

Listen to the tape of six speakers, some of whom are speaking their first language and some of whom are speaking their second language. Judging by the accent of each speaker (1-6) circle *NS* if you think he/she is a native speaker, or *NNS* if you think he/she is speaking his/her second language; if second language, indicate at what age you think he/she started to learn the second language.

CENDRILLON (French)

1. NS
2. NNS: .24....
3. NNS: .14....

CINDERELLA (English)

4. NNS: .12...
5. NNS: .birth....
6. NNS: .10....

Biographical Information on Speakers

CENDRILLON

Speaker No. 1: Joanne: Simultaneous English/French; mother was English, functionally bilingual and spoke only English to Joanne. Father was fluently bilingual but spoke only French to her. Joanne was the youngest child and all the children went to French school in Ontario, so from the start the language of contact with her siblings was French. Now works in French exclusively and has almost no contact with English. Even speaks French to mother and only resorts to English when mother has difficulty understanding something.

Speaker No. 2: Mary Jo: English L1; Turkish L2 (but lost); French L3. First exposure to French at 24 at the Mission Française, a French cultural mission in Turkey, 5 X 3 hours/week; at the time, some informal exposure to French but very little. Married Belgian but speaks English with him. In the 70's spent 2 years in Tunisia, so had lots of informal exposure to French for two years. Now lives in English neighborhood, works in predominantly English environment, ends up speaking French a few minutes a day (with depanneur owners, for example) and has the odd social occasion in French.

Speaker No. 3: Debra: English L1; French L2. Grew up in Toronto; first exposure to French in Grade 9 (14 years old), grammar-translation ranging from 1 hour per week to 2-1/2 hours per week for 5 years. Teachers were anglophone. Went on to University of Toronto to study languages for two years; teachers were French from France for the most part, but only exposure was in class. For her third year Debra went to Laval University in Ste-Foy (21 years old) for one year of intensive French, but the degree was for non-francophones and most exposure outside of class was English. Moved to Trois-Rivières for two years of complete French submersion and stayed on to teach ESL for another two years. Went back to Toronto for one year, during which she taught French to English children. Moved to Quebec, married a Quebecois and has been living in a French environment for 5 years. Presently speaks French 60-70% of the time, English 30-40% of the time.

CINDERELLA

Speaker No. 4: Pierre: French L1; English L2. First exposure to English at 5 but just occasional informal exposure to neighborhood children. He was too shy to participate. At 12 had grammar/translation at school, about 3 hours/week until end of High School; teachers were francophone. In CEGEP, one year of communicative methodology, but quite unsuccessful. In university studied Engineering in French, but textbooks in English. No English contact. Worked 5 years in job with no English contact so changed jobs in order to have contact. English learned on this job. Now speaks English 25% of the work day but lives in French.

Speaker No. 5: Joanne: Remember Joanne (Speaker No. 1) with the English mother and the French father ? Her mother spoke English to her from birth but she went ot French school in Ontario and was only exposed to French peers. English instruction was introduced in Grade 5. Grammar Translation ranging from 1-3 hours per week until the end of high school. Studied Enginnering at Université de Montréal. All texts were English but all social contact was French. After university worked for two years in French, but any reading and writing was done in English (e. g., reports, etc.,). Remember also that she now works in French exclusively and has almost no contact with English. Even speaks French to her anglophone mother.

Speaker No. 6: Josée: French L1; English L2. Went to French school for K-5 but mother switched her to an English school after grade 5, so had first exposure to English at age 10. Repeated 5 in English and continued in complete submersion until Secondary 4. This was in Quebec City so most of the students were bilingual and they spoke a lot of French in the school yard, (as French was prohibited they'd switch to English whenever a teacher was around). Even now switches from English to French and back again constantly when she speaks. Quit school and worked in French 80% of the time. Moved to Montreal at 19, now speaks 50/50 at home and out. Never took an ESL course.

Day	1
Activity	9 ***Age: Beyond Pronunciation***
Objective	To demonstrate the relationship between age and aspects of second language acquisition other than pronunciation
Time	20 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook page 36
Resources	Summary, Patkowski Study Participants' Workbook page 36, *Study Questions on Patkowski study*

Procedure

1 Point out that most of the studies on second language acquisition and age have focused on pronunciation. This study, Patkowski 1980, focused on age and the acquisition of syntax (word order), and the results are quite interesting.

2 Ask participants to turn to page 37, Patkowski study, and to preview the study questions.

3 Give the participants 10 minutes or so to read the summary and to answer the study questions in small groups or pairs. Consolidate the summary by eliciting and commenting on their answers to the study questions (see Answer Key).

4 Again, ask the question:

- *SO, DOES THAT MEAN THAT SECOND LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION SHOULD BE STARTED AS YOUNG AS POSSIBLE?*

5 Allow a brief discussion and acknowledge that there seems to be a good case for starting second language instruction as early as possible, but that there are other issues to be considered.

*Alternative Procedure

1-2 Follow the general procedure.

3 Give the participants 10 minutes or so to read the summary, but do not have them answer the questions. Consolidate the summary by eliciting responses to the study questions.

4-5 Follow the general procedure.

Answer Key

Preview the following study questions before reading the text. Return to them after you have read the text carefully and answer them in the space provided.

1. What makes Patkowski's (1980) study different from most of the others which have studied the effect of age of acquisition on second language development?

   The others studied phonological development while Patkowski studied syntactic development.

2. Did Patkowski expect age of acquisition to make a difference in the acquisition of syntax?

   Yes, he hypothesized that only younger learners could ever hope to achieve native-like mastery of the syntax of a second language.

3. What special factor does Patkowski believe is responsible for the fact that post-puberty learners show a variety of levels of proficiency in second language acquisition while pre-puberty learners are almost all highly proficient?

   Age of acquisition. For pre-puberty learners, second language acquisition is biologically natural. After puberty, language learning is like learning any skill. Some people are good at it and some are not.

4. The pre-puberty group probably received more hours of classroom instruction in their second language acquisition than the post-puberty group. How do we know that this factor is not responsible for their higher scores?

   Because Patkowski controlled for this variable. In other words, he did a statistical test which permitted him to separate these two variables, and he was able to look at the effects of age of acquisition without the number of hours of second language instruction confounding the results.

5. What did Patkowski conclude about a genetically-based sensitive period for second language acquisition?

   He concluded that there is a sensitive period for the acquisition of syntax.

The Patkowski Study

Most studies which have investigated the relation of age acquisition with second language development have focused on the attainment of the phonological system, and most have concluded that age of acquisition is a strong predictor of accent. But what of the other linguistic features of language development? Is syntactic development, for example, as dependent on age of acquisition as phonological development? Do older learners ever achieve native-like mastery of word order and sentence structure?

Mark Patkowski (1980), at City University of New York, studied the effect of age on the acquisition of syntax in a second language. Patkowski hypothesized that only those who began learning their second language before the age of fifteen could ever achieve full, native-like acquisition of syntax in that language. He predicted that adult second language learners would achieve total native fluency.

Sixty-seven highly educated and professional U.S. immigrants who had started to learn English at various ages were tested for syntactic proficiency in English. Fifteen native-born Americans were also tested to provide a control group and evidence concerning the validity of the research procedures.

Five-minute samples of taped interviews were transcribed and rated by trained native-speaker judges. Age at beginning of second language acquisition was the main variable being tested but three other variables were also studied and controlled for: 1) years in the U.S., 2) informal exposure to English, and 3) formal English as a second language instruction.

The results were quite revealing. On a scale of zero to five, where zero represented zero mastery and five represented native-like mastery, 32 out of 33 pre-puberty learners scored at the 4+ or the 5 level, whereas the vast majority of the post-puberty learners centered around the 3+ level. In other words, the curve for the pre-puberty learners was strongly skewed to the right (high proficiency) while the score for the post-puberty learners was "normally" distributed. This normal curve for the post-puberty group suggests the usual range of abilities found for performance on a variety of skills. The unbalanced distribution for the pre-puberty group, on the other hand, suggests that some special factor is at work. Moreover, when interactions with the other three variables were tested and controlled for, this strong relationship between age at which second language learning is begun and syntactic rating was upheld. In other

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Patkowski, M.S. (1980). "The Sensitive Period for the Acquisition of Syntax in a Second Language", *Language Learning*, 30, no. 2, December 1980.

words, a person who had arrived in the U.S. at the age of eighteen and had lived there for twenty years did not score significantly better than someone who had arrived at the age of eighteen but had only lived there for nine years. Similarly, amount of instruction did not correlate with success to the extent that age did.

Thus, Patkowski found that the age of acquisition is a limiting factor in the acquisition of syntax in a second language. His results were highly consistent with the hypothesis that there is a genetically-based sensitive period for second language acquisition.

* * *

Day	1
Activity	10 ***Beyond Age***
Objective	To illustrate that age is not a sufficient predictor of second language learning success
Time	10 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook, page 40
Resources	Cassette recorder, tape #1/10, *Beyond Age*

Procedure

1. Ask participants to listen to the tape of children speaking French and ask what they think of these children's mastery of French. (Tape is of adolescents who learned French in early immersion classes, but withhold this information for the time being).

2. Ask when these children seem to have learned French.
(Possible responses : Children probably learned late because their mastery leaves something to be desired.)

3. Acknowledge that these children haven't achieved mastery and ask what they think could be responsible for the deficiency.
(Possible responses: late start; lack of exposure; poor learning, etc.)

4. Inform the participants that these children learned their second language in early immersion classes; i.e., their exposure to their second language started at age 5 or 6.

   With participants, draw the conclusion that age alone is not a sufficient predictor of language learning success.

Day	1	
Activity	11	***Age, Rate of Learning and Ultimate Success in Second Language Acquisition***
Objective	To illustrate that older learners proceed through the early stages of language acquisition more rapidly	
Time	20 minutes	
Reference	Participants' Workbook, page 41	
Resources	Overhead projector and acetate, *Age, Rate of Learning and Ultimate Success*	

Procedure

1 Ask participants to turn to page 41, *Age, Rate of Learning and Ultimate Success* Worksheet, and explain that the worksheet is a table summarizing a study in which it was found that older learners may have an advantage in some aspects of the language.

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> *Study finds that older children have an advantage over younger children in the rule-governed aspects of language; that teenagers did better than adults on many measures but that this appears to reflect* ***rate*** *of acquisition rather than* ***eventual attainment****; that no age group achieved native-like pronunciation.*

2 Briefly explain the aims of the study and how it was carried out (see For Your Information, below).

3 Ask the participants which age group they think might have picked up the most Dutch by the time they were tested in the first of the three trials. Which age group would have made the most progress by the time they were tested in the third trial. Ask them to answer by marking an X for the group they think did the best at the beginning of the year (rate) on each test, and a Y for the group they think did the best at the end of the year (eventual attainment).

4 Put the acetate *Age, Rate of Learning and Ultimate Success* on the overhead projector and go over the answers with the participants. (Workshop Leader's Manual page 61)

5 Bring their attention to the results and conclusions on page 42 in their workbooks and go over them together.

Draw inferences:

- Age is not the only predictor of success
- Different types of learning environments are more successful at different ages
- Older learners have an advantage in **rate** of learning although they do not ordinarily reach complete mastery

For Your Information

Age, Rate of Learning and Ultimate Success in Second Language Acquisition

• Aims and Methodology

In 1978, Catherine Snow and her Dutch colleague Marian Hoefnagel-Höhle published an article on a research project they had carried out in Holland. They had studied the progress of a group of English speakers who were learning Dutch as a second language. What made their research especially valuable was that the learners they were following included children as young as three years old and adults. Furthermore, the learners' acquisition of Dutch was investigated in the context of a large number of different types of language use and language knowledge.

***Pronunciation** was tested by having learners pronounce 80 Dutch words twice: the first time immediately after hearing a native speaker say the word. The second time, a few minutes later, they were asked to say the word represented in a picture, without a model to imitate. Tape recordings of the learners were rated by a native speaker of Dutch on a six-point scale.*

*For the **auditory discrimination** test, learners saw pictures of four objects. In each group of four there were two whose names were minimal pairs, that is, alike except for one sound. (An example for English would be* **ship** *and* **sheep**. *Learners heard one of the words and were asked to indicate which picture was named by the word they heard. Scores were based on the presence or absence of «auditory confusion», that is, a wrong answer which as the other member of the minimal pair. If a wrong answer was a totally different word, it was counted separately and not considered an auditory discrimination problem.*

Morphology *was tested using a procedure similar to the famous "wug"test. Again, to take an example from English, learners were asked to complete sentences such as* if you have one boy, then you have two ___.

The ***sentence repetition*** *task required learners to repeat thirty-seven sentences of increasing length and grammatical complexity. Scores were determined by adding the total number of words correctly repeated.*

For **sentence translation**, *learners were given sixty sentences to translate from English to Dutch. A point was given for each grammatical structure which was rendered into the correct Dutch equivalent.*

The ***sentence judgement*** *task gave learners the opportunity to judge which of two sentences was better. The same content was expressed in both sentences, but one sentence was grammatically correct while the other contained errors.*

The **Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test** *was developed as a test for young native speakers of a language. Learners see four pictures and hear one isolated word. Their task is to indicate which picture corresponds to the word they have heard. The score is the number of pictures correctly identified.*

Story comprehension *was actually story retelling. Learners heard a story in Dutch and were then asked to retell the story in English or Dutch (according to their preference). They were scored on the bases of how many of 30 key points they mentioned in their retelling.*

Finally, the ***storytelling*** *task required learners to tell a story which corresponded to a set of pictures they were given. Their scores on this task were based on fluency which was defined as -the ratio of words to seconds talking. In other words, for this task, it was rate of delivery of speech rather than the expression of content or formal accuracy which mattered.*

The learners were divided into several age groups, but,for our discussion here we will divide them into just three groups: children (aged 3 to 10), adolescents (12-15 years), and adults. Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle do not specify the age range for adults exactly but we know that the group included university students and parents of the children and adolescents whose acquisition of Dutch was also studied.

- **Results and Conclusions**

The adolescents are by far the most successful learners in this study. They are ahead of everyone on the first test. That is , within the first few months, they had already made the most progress in learning Dutch. What may be surprising is that it was the adults, not the children, whose scores were second best on the first test. In other words, adolescents and adults learned faster than children in the first few months of exposure to Dutch.

By the end of the year, however, the children were rapidly catching up or had, in fact, surpassed the adults on several measures. Nevertheless, it was the adolescents who retained the highest levels of performance.

What can we conclude from this research ? Interestingly, Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle argue that their results provide evidence that there is no critical period *for language acquisition. Other conclusions are compatible with the evidence they present, however.*

One conclusion is that some of the tests, for example, sentence judgement or translation, were too hard for young learners — not because the language itself was too hard but because the tasks were at a level beyond the children's cognitive capacities.

Another conclusion is that, while adults and adolescents learn faster in the early stages of second language development, young children eventually catch up and even surpass them if their exposure to the language takes place in contexts where they are surrounded by the language on a daily basis.

Nevertheless, one conclusion is sure: adults and adolescents can make considerable and rapid progress toward mastery of a second language in contexts of daily use of that language in social, personal and professional or academic interaction.

Answer Key

Age, Rate of Learning and Ultimate Success in Second Language Acquisition

TASK / AGE	3-10 CHILD	12-15 ADOLESCENT	ADULT
Pronunciation	*	*	
Auditory Discrimination		X Y	
Morphology		X Y	
Sentence Repetition		X Y	
Sentence Translation	**	X Y	
Sentence Judgment	**	X Y	
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test		X Y	
Story comprehension	Y	X	
Storytelling	Y	X	

---

* Scores almost identical on final test (Y)

** These tests too hard for child learners

Day	1
Activity	12 ***OPINION POLL ON AGE: BALLOT 2***
Objective	To examine the extent to which participants' opinions have been affected by the afternoon's discussion
Time	5 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook, page 43
Resources	One ballot (small blank piece of paper) per participant, pens or pencils

Procedure

1 Write the same question on the board:

- IS IT BETTER TO START SECOND LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN GRADE 1, GRADE 4 OR SECONDARY 1?

2 Ask participants to vote again on secret ballots.

3 Collect ballots, tally responses and record results of both ballots on board.

☞ *There will probably be more votes for a later start on the second ballot.*

4 Conclude that because age is not the only factor at work, starting second language instruction early may not make as big a difference as some think.

*Alternative Procedure

You may simply give the question orally and ask for a show of hands and compare with results of Ballot 1.

Day	1	
Activity	13	***Summary: Age and Other Factors***
Objective	To consolidate issue of age and to arrive at an answer to the question: *IS IT BETTER TO START SECOND LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN GRADE 1, GRADE 4 OR SECONDARY 1 ?*	
Time	10 minutes	
References	Participants' Workbook, page 44	
Resources	Cassette Recorder Tape #1/13, Summary: Age & Other Factors	

Procedure

1 Ask participants to turn to page 44 *Summary: Age and Other Factors,* and to take notes on the lecture they will hear.

For Your Information

The lecture concludes that age of beginning is not the only predictor of success. Different types of learning environments are more successful at different ages. Young learners don't do well on grammatical tasks while older learners do. Total amount of instruction is just as impoortant as age of beginning. Time is a crucial variable.

2 Turn on tape of summary lecture.

3 Conclude the day by pointing out that in this unit of the 5-day module we have seen that individual language learners approach the language learning task in different ways and come equipped with different abilities. We have also seen that starting early is no guarantee for absolute success at language learning: the amount of time available is also a crucial variable.

4 Announce that in the next unit of the module on language acquisition we'll be looking at how children learn their first language and what bearing this might have on second language acquisition.

Summary : Age and Other Factors

In today's workshop we have seen that language learning is affected by many things — by the age of the learner, the learner's attitudes toward learning the language, certain intellectual abilities and academic experiences, as well as the characteristics of the learning environment. It should be emphasized that these individual or group differences seem principally to affect the rate *at which learners progress through the stages of language acquisition as well as the extent to which learners eventually* master *the language they are learning.*

In answer to the question which you have been asked so many times today, IS IT BETTER TO START SECOND LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN GRADE 1, GRADE 4 OR SECONDARY 1 ?, it is clear that starting age is not the only predictor of success. There is evidence that children who are surrounded by a second language from a very early age can reach native-like mastery. But starting second language instruction in Grade 1 is not the same as surrounding the learner from a very early age. *A few hours a week of second language instruction, even if started in Grade 1, is hardly going to lead to full native-like mastery.*

In contrast, the evidence suggests that older *learners are more efficient in instructional settings. The additional knowledge and skills which older learners bring to the task allow them to* learn *language, that is, to study the language — its rules, its systems and its word formation patterns. And if older children and adults are able to progress more rapidly through the early stages of language development, perhaps students will learn more if they start later but receive a more intense exposure to the language. It is not an easy question to answer, but it should be clear by now that starting young is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for total mastery of a second language. Total amount of instruction and type of learning environment are equally important variables.*

While differences in rate and eventual mastery are important, we have also seen that there are strong similarities in the paths learners follow in language development. These similarities are easily seen and acknowledged when we look at the development of children learning their mother tongue. They make similar errors, learn some specific aspects of language very early in their development and have much more difficulty with others which they may not master until they are in school.

Among second language learners too there are many similarities in the course of language development. The similarities are particularly striking among learners who have the same mother tongue, but even among learners who have different first *languages and whose first languages differ from each other as well as from the target language, certain aspects of the target language will still develop in the same way. That is, learners will make similar errors, find similar structures easy or hard to master, proceed through similar developmental stages. Furthermore, these similarities are present in both children and adults learning the second language. Even more remarkable is the fact that some error types and some developmental stages (though by no means all) are shared by children learning the language as their mother tongue and children and adults learning it as a second language. Finally, and perhaps most striking, second language learners who get formal instruction in the language at school pass through stages of development and make errors similar to those of second language learners who learn the language informally—in the workplace or playground.*

In Day 2 of this module on language acquisition we will explore some of the explanations that are offered for the similarity researchers have found among language learners in so many different settings, and we will begin to look more specifically at how different theories about how language is learned or acquired *influence theories about how language should be taught.*

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THEORIES OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

DAY 2

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Day 2 at a Glance

1. Analysis of humorous examples of creative child language establishes link between processes at work and theories of language acquisition.

2. Jigsaw reading and presentation of case studies of abnormal language acquisition demonstrate that behaviorist position is insufficient to account for language learning.

3. Summary of text on innatist position leads to discussion of validity of "critical period" hypothesis and now the belief in an innate ability has found its expression in second language teaching methodology.

4. Video "Out of the Mouths of Babes" presents creative child language as support for the theory that human beings are quipped with an innate language acquisition device which needs a normal range of exposure to environmental stimuli in order to be activated.

5. Analysis of second language classroom data explores the difference between first and second language acquisition, namely second language learners have a first language and more cognitive maturity to crack the second language code.

6. Reading and discussion focuses attention on the major theories of second language acquisition and their implications and applications in the classroom.

7. Concluding remarks assign at-home reading and applied assignment, both of which provide transition to material presented in Day 3, *Learner Language and Developmental Stages*.

Objectives of Day 2

- ***To become familiar with the processes and strategies operating in both "natural" and classroom language acquisition (e.g. generalization, initiation), and with the characteristics of both the "natural" and the classroom environments (e.g. input, interaction, time factors, feedback on error.)***

- ***To distinguish between input (language available in the environment) and intake (the input which the learner is willing and able to receive)***

- ***To become familiar with the theories of language learning, their evolution and their relation to language teaching methods***

At the end of the session, the participants will:

- understand the internal processes at work in language acquisition
- discover the three major types of theories of language acquisition
- recognize weaknesses in behaviorist theory of language acquisition
- appreciate some of the similarities and differences between first and second language learning
- see the influence of language acquisition theory on materials, methodologies and classroom practices

List of References and Resources

1. Chalk and blackboard; or large writing tablet and felt markers; or acetates for the overhead projector and acetate pens
2. Worshop Leader Manual
3. Participants' Workbooks for Day 2
4. 3/4" VHS video cassette recorder, *Out of the Mouths of Babes*

Recommended Reading for Participants

Text: Activity 4, page 91, *The Innatist Position*

Recommended Reading for Workshop Leader

Krashen, S. 1977. "The Monitor Model for Adult Second Language Performance", in Burt, M. , H. Dulay and M. Finochhiaro (eds.) 1977.*Viewpoints on English as a Second Language*. New York: Regent's.

Day	2	
Activity	1	*How do they do it?*
Objectives	• To establish link between the internal processes at work in language acquisition (Day 1) and the theories which take into account both internal processes and external characteristics of the learning environment • To introduce the three major types of theories of language acquisition	
Time	15 minutes	
References	Participants' Workbook page 50	
Resources	None required	

Procedure

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Please note that this activity is a transition between Days 1 and 2 of the module. This and other transitional activities in subsequent days of the module are meant to be quick, motivating tastes of what is to come. Please do not linger, but stick to the time allotted.

1 Ask the participants to turn to page 50 of their workbook, *How Do They Do It?*. Explain that the data are examples of children's utterances and that the object of the exercise is to explain what process(es) is (are) responsible for the form of each utterance, or group of utterances. Do children simply imitate everything they hear; do they practice new structures; do they sense rules and then generalize them to new contexts ? In other words, what can we ascertain about how children learn language?

2 Bring the participants' attention to the *Processes and Examples* on page 50 of their workbooks. Explain that these are some of the common processes known to operate in language learning. Give the participants time to look at the definitions and examples of each and then direct their attention to the data which begins on page 51. Ask them to examine each instance of child language and to say what process seems to be working in each.

Processes and Examples

IMITATION: Word-for-word repetition of an utterance

Mother: Would you like some bread and peanut butter?
Katie: Some bread and peanut butter.

PRACTISING: Repetitive manipulation of form

Michel: I can handle it. Hannah can handle it. We can handle it.

OVERGENERALIZATION: Sensing a new rule and then overgeneralizing it to new and inappropriate contexts.

Mother: Alanna, sit up.
Alanna: I sitted up already.

SIMPLIFICATION: Simplifying a structure by leaving off an idiosyncratic or irregular feature.

Chelsea: My daddy take the train to work everyday.

CREATIVE USE OF VOCABULARY: Misuse of vocabulary due to incomplete mastery of the full meaning of the word in question.

Michel: I get it first because I'm the guest.
Mother: What does guest mean?
Michel: It means the one who wants it first!

3 After the participants have had time to read and react to the data (5-10 min), elicit reactions, responses, explanations from the participants. Go over the analysis of the data sets (see Answer Keys following each example in Data Set of the Workshop Leader's Manual pages 76-80) with the participants, and conclude that first language learning is not simply a matter of imitation and practice. Children have the ability to create constructions which go beyond what they have heard. There are various theories to explain child language acquisition, and today we'll look at some of them.

4 Point out that on page 56 of their workbook (see Workshop Leader's Manual page 80), the three major groups of theories of language acquisition are summarized.

5 Ask them to read the theories silently.

Data set

I: Peter
Peter (24 months) is playing with a dump truck while two adults look on.
Peter: (finding a car) *"Get more."*
Lois: *You're gonna put more wheels in the dump truck?»*
Peter: *dump truck / wheels / dump truck*
Patsy: *What happened to it?»* (the truck)
Peter: (looking under chair for it) *hm / lose it /dump truck! dump truck! fall! fall!*
Lois: *Yes. the dump truck fell down.*
Peter: *dump truck fell down / dump truck*
(later)
Patsy: *I's yucky outside, strictly yucky*
Peter: *yucky / yucky*
Patsy: *yucky*
Peter: (...)
Patsy: *I'm gonna take these and put them back on the little car, ok?*
Peter: *Put them back / ok /*

Peter (25 months) playing with pencil and paper
Patsy: *Now you're going to write. What're you going to write?*
Peter: *car / a car / make a car?*
Lois: *Make a what? a car?*
Peter: *ka ka*
Lois: *Want me to make a car?*
Peter: *car ... make a ...*
Lois: *Oh. I'll make a car. There's a car*
Peter: *Here's a car*
Lois: *Mm hm*
Peter: *Oh / make / make / me make a car too!*

(Peter indicating he wants Patsy to draw)
Peter: *Lois / Lois too / Patsy / Lois too!*
Patsy: *You want me to make a car? OK*

(Patsy draws tiny car like Lois's)
Patsy: *Oh, you want Lois to have some paper?*
Peter: *Lois have some paper?*
(later)
Patsy: *Let's see if I can draw what you draw. Draw something!*
Peter: *draw something!*

Answer key

It's not hard to see that Peter imitates a great deal. However, it should be stressed that very few children imitate to the extent that Peter does. Imitation is his individual strategy. It was found that 30-40 % of Peter's speech consists of imitations compared to less than 10% of some children's speech! It is also interesting to note that his imitations are not random; he doesn't imitate everything he hears. Very detailed analyses showed that Peter imitates new words and intonations until they become solidly grounded in his language system, and then goes on to imitate other new words and structures. Thus, unlike a parrot who imitates the familiar, for Peter at least, imitation is selective and based on what he is in the process of learning.

II: Cindy

Cindy (24 months, 16 days, looking at a picture of a carrot in a book and trying to get Patsy's attention): kawo? kawo? kawo? kawo?

Patsy: *What are the rabbits eating?*

Cindy: *They eating … kando?*

Patsy: *No, that's a carrot.*

Cindy: *Carrot (pointing to each carrot on the page) the other … carrot, the other carrot, the other carrot*

(a few minutes later, Cindy brings Patsy a stuffed toy rabbit)

Patsy: *What does this rabbit like to eat?*

Cindy: *(…) eat the carrots*

(Cindy gets another stuffed rabbit)

Cindy: *He (…) eat carrots. The other one eat carrots. They both eat carrots.*

Cindy: (One week later, Cindy opens the book to the same page.) *Here's the carrots* (pointing) *Is that a carrot?*

Patsy: *Yes.*

Cindy (25 months, 1 day, playing with several dolls, one of which she calls a tiger): *Doll go to sleep.*

Patsy: *Does the doll want to go to sleep?*

Cindy (not answering Patsy, but talking to dolls in "motherly" tones): *Okay, I take you. Come on, Doll … (…) go to sleep with the tiger. (…) go to sleep. Doll wants to go to sleep.*

Patsy: *Does the tiger want to go to sleep?*

Cindy: *Tiger wants to go to sleep. The doll wants to go to sleep. He go to sleep.*

Cindy (25 months, 1 day, looking out the window): *Look at the grass* ((holding a little wooden bird and pointing him to "look" out the window): *I show the bird the grass.* (turning the bird to "look" at Patsy): *I show the bird Patsy ... I show the bird ... I show the bird ...*

Patsy: *What are you showing the bird?*

Cindy: *the grass.*

Answer key

Cindy appears to work on her language acquisition. She practises new structures much like the audio-lingual approach requires learners to practise. Her *he eat carrots / the other one eat carrots / they both eat carrots* is reminiscent of a substitution drill. However, again it should be stressed that this is Cindy's individual strategy and not a universal in child language acquisition. Not all children *practise* to the extent that Cindy does in these examples, and Cindy herself is practising more here than in some other samples of her speech.

III: Various children (Note: The ages of children older than two and a half are shown in years and months, e.g., 6, 10 means six years and ten months.)

1. Kyo (6,10): *I'm hungry.*
   Dad: *We'll have some poppy seed bread in a little while.*
   Kyo: *No. I want it now.*
   Dad: *We have to wait' til it's defrosted.*
   Kyo: *But I like it frossed.*
   Michel (2,11) *Yeah. I like it frossed.*
2. Randall (3 yrs) had a little bump on his hand and his mother said that they'd have to take him to the doctor.
   Randall: *Why? So he can doc my little bump?*
3. Lucy (13): *What were you saying about me?*
   David (Lucy's brother, 6, 9): *Oh, I was just talking about behavements.*
4. Michel (2,10): *Mummy, I'm hiccing up and I can't stop.*
5. Randall (6.2) and David were discussing weapons, specifically scissors:
   Randall: *Lucy's is good for dagging inside things. She can dag inside a wall.*
6. Mother: *Get undressed* (after many repetitions)
   David (3,11): *I'm getting undressed.*
   I'm getting on dressed.
   I'm getting on dressed.
   I'm getting off dressed.
7. David (4,4): *It was upside down but I turned it upside right.*

Answer key

Nos. 1 through 7 are all examples of children in the process of learning the rules of word formation and overgeneralizing them to new contexts.

1. Kyo recognizes the affixes *de* and *ed* but takes the root of "defrosted" to be "fross" and so his version of *frozen* comes out as *frossed*.

2. Randall manages to form the verb *doc* from the noun *doctor*.

3. David has figured out that the *ment* inflection forms words that express acts or stages, and so (on the analogy with *enforcement* or *excitement*) to talk about the act of *behaving* he forms "behavements".

4. Michel has heard many two-word *up* verbs, such as *stand up* and *drink up* and so moves the *up* out of *hiccuping* to form *hiccing up*.

5. Randall takes the root of *dagger* to be *dag* and so to express the notion of *puncturing* he comes up with *dagging* and *to dag*

6. David isn't sure what he hears. He doesn't yet understand the prefix *un*. He first analyzes the sounds and concludes he hears *ondressed*. Then he analyses the situation and concludes that this time he's supposed to be taking things off and so he arrives at the conclusion that he should be getting *offdressed*, not *ondressed*

7. David is trying to find consistency: upside down and upside right ?

or

upside down and rightside up ?

Other children invent *upside up*..

8. When Kyo (2,11), who had been a vegetarian since birth, was offered a piece of chicken, he replied: *No. I don't like chicken ... I don't eat dead animals. I eat ... dead ... salad !*

9. Michel (2,9), who had been a vegetarian up until the age of two and a half, was watching his mother carve a turkey for the first time. He peered inside the cavity of the turkey where a whole onion had been cooked, and said *Oh look! A turkey pit!*

10. At Lucy's 12th birthday, toasts were proposed with grape juice in stemmed glasses:

Father: *I'd like to propose a toast.*

After a long period without toasts, David (5 years, 1 month) raised his glass and said *I'd like to propose a piece of bread*. Only after all the laughter sent David slinking from the table did the group realize that he wasn't joking!

11. David (2,9): *Daddy turned on the window* (when Daddy opened the window shade and let in the light).

12. Mother: *I love you to pieces.*

David(4,1): *I love you three pieces.*

Answer key

Nos. 8 through 12 are all examples of creative use of vocabulary. In each case the child is in the process of discovering the full (or limited) meaning of the word in question.

8. If chickens are dead before we can eat them then, all things we eat must be dead before we can eat them (or something like that)!
9. *A turkey pit* on the analogy with *a plum pit* and *an avocado pit*.
10. Poor David ! If we can propose *toasts* why can't we propose breads?
11. We turn on lights so why can't we turn on windows? Same result!
12. What does *to pieces* mean anyway? At least *two pieces* would give some indication of how much she loves me! And I can do better than that! *Three pieces*!

13. Randall (2, 10): *You took all the towels away because I can't dry my hands.*

14. Randall (2, 10): *Are dogs can wiggle their tails?*

Answer key

Nos. 13 and 14 are both examples of systematic misuse of syntactic structures which have not yet been full acquired.

13. He means *I can't dry my hands because you took all the towels away*. He's made a mistake about which clause comes first.

14. He has begun to ask correct yes/no questions. This means placing the auxiliary verb at the beginning of the sentence. Randall has misinterpreted the rule and concluded that the trick of asking questions is to put a certain word at the beginning of the sentence – somewhat like the French *est-ce que* form. Other examples include *Are those are my boots?* and *Are this is hot?*

For Your Information

Theories of Language Acquisition

*The **Behaviorists** posit that language learning is simply a matter of imitation and habit formation. They claim that it is a stimulus/response process and regardless of the quality and quantity of input, all normal human beings will imitate and ultimately acquire the full-blown system.*

*The **Innatists** claim that all human beings are equipped with a language learning capability which, if stimulated at the appropriate time, will lead to language acquisition. Noam Chomsky, the most famous of the innatists, claimed that the language that a child is exposed to is often ungrammatical and never contains sufficient numbers of examples of the complex language structures which any normal child eventually knows. According to his theory, the language acquisition device (LAD) is capable of using minimal input in discovering the rules of the adult language.*

*The **Interactionists'** position is that language develops as a result of the complex interplay between a distinctly human predisposition and the environment which the individual is exposed to. Unlike the innatists, the interactionists claim that the language of the environment is frequently modified to suit the capability of the learner, and that this modification, which is intuitively made to help the child understand what is said, is a crucial element in the language acquisition process.*

Day	2
Activity	2 ***Language Acquisition Under Abnormal Circumstances: Case Studies***
Objectives	• To focus the participants' attention on the factors at work in language acquisition • To discover some of the principles governing language acquisition, and to show evidence against a simple behaviorist position
Time	45 minutes
Reference	Participants' Workbook pages 57
Resources	None required

Procedure

1. Ask the participants if any of them knows of a case of an individual learning his or her first language under unusual circumstances (e.g., children of deaf parents, Helen Keller). What were the circumstances? What was the result?

2. Tell the participants that next we will be looking at documented cases of language acquisition under abnormal circumstances.

3. Divide the group into sub-groups of four participants each. Assign one of the case studies to each sub-group. Ask the participants to read silently the case study assigned to their respective group.

4. In their groups, the participants should discuss what they think might account for the incomplete language acquisition (e.g., lack of in-put, lack of stimulation, age of learning). Ask the participants to name a spokesperson for each sub-group, to present the case study and the group's views on it.

5. Have each group briefly recount the case study in plenary and comment on what they think accounts for the incomplete acquisition.

For Your Information

Eventually, both l'enfant sauvage *and* Genie *were given intensive stimulus/response opportunity to learn language, but neither child ever achieved mastery. These two case studies seem to be evidence for a critical period. But more importantly, they demonstrate that the behaviorist theories are insufficient to account for language learning.*

Research in primate language acquisition demonstrates that humans are unique in their ability to acquire language as we know it. This research is consistent with the view that there is a distinctly human inborn capacity for language. It also presents evidence against a strictly behaviorist view of language learning.

Case Studies

The following case studies are examples of unusual language acquisition and provide interesting insights into the process of language acquisition.

***Case Study 1:* L'enfant sauvage**

In 1799, a boy of approximately 12 years of age was found wandering naked in the woods of Aveyron in France. Upon capture, he was found to be completely wild, having had no contact with humankind. A young doctor, Jean-Marc-Gaspard Itard refused to believe what other authorities concluded, that «Victor» was, and had probably been abandoned because he was, an incurable idiot. Itard believed that his subnormality was a result of the fact that he had had no intercourse with other human beings. Although Itard lived long before 20th Century behavioral psychologists proposed a theory of language learning through a system of imitation, rewards and punishments, he believed that, among other things, Victor could be led to speech by "inducing the exercise of imitation through the imperious law of necessity"(p.11). Itard devoted five years to the task of civilizing Victor and teaching him language.

Although Itard succeeded to varying extents in developing Victor's sociability, memory, judgement and all the functions of his senses, his most disappointing results were in Victor's language development. He remained unreceptive to all sounds other than those which had meaning for him in the forest, for example, the cracking of a nut, animal sounds, the sound of rain, etc. He succeeded in learning to read a number of labels and attaching them to objects, but then did not, on his own, transfer the labels to new objects. He even learned to make use of limited writing to express his wants. But he only succeeded in speaking two words, his favorite food lait *and his governess's frequent exclamation "O Dieu!" Moreover, his use of* lait *was only uttered as an excited exclamation at the sight of a glass of milk. He could not be brought to call for the one object he was capable of naming. Even when Itard deprived Victor of milk in hopes of making him call for it, Victor never used the word to communicate his need.*

After a full year of intensive work on Victor's speech development, Itard finally gave up and concluded that "imitation is used in learning to speak only during earliest childhood". (p. 85)

Clearly, Itard's mistake was to believe that environment could accomplish everything. What he eventually came to admit was that the environment has its optimal effect *when applied at the right time, according to the built-in biological clock. This is especially true in regard to language development.*

Case Study 2: Genie

Genie was discovered in 1970, a 13-1/2-year-old girl who had been almost completely isolated, deprived, neglected and abused since the age of 20 months. Because of the irrational demands of a disturbed father and the submission and fear of an abused mother, Genie had spent more than eleven years tied to a chair or a crib in a small, darkened room. Her father had forbidden his wife and son to speak to her and had himself only growled and barked at her. She was beaten every time she vocalized or made any kind of noise, and she had long since resorted to complete silence. Genie was unsocialized, primitive, and undeveloped physically, emotionally and intellectually. Needless to say, Genie had no language.

Since then, Genie has been rehabilitated and educated in the most natural surroundings possible, and to the fullest extent possible. After a brief period in a rehabilitation centre, Genie lived in a normal, loving foster home and attended special schools. Although far from being normal *Genie made remarkable progress in becoming socialized and cognitively aware. She developed deep personal relationships and strong individual tastes and traits. But despite the «natural» environment for language acquisition, Genie's language development has not paralleled normal first language development. In fact, it is far from normal.*

After five years of rehabilitation, a period during which a normal child would have acquired a full-blown language system, Genie's language contained many of the features of abnormal language development. These include a larger than normal disparity between comprehension and production; abnormal variability in rule application; a retarded rate of development; overuse of stereotypic speech; and absence of specific syntactic forms and mechanisms always present in normal grammatical development.

In sum, her language shares the features of language development exhibited by adults with brain damage in the left (language) hemisphere of the brain and who have had to re-learn language in adulthood, by children in the earliest stage of language acquisition, and by chimps attempting to learn language.

Genie's case is tragic instance of deprivation during the so-called critical period. *It is the most carefully documented and tested case allowing linguists to study the hypotheses regarding critical periods and appropriate stimulation. And what it seems to indicate is that environment alone is insufficient to accomplish normal language acquisition. Again, it can be concluded that environment has its optimal effect when applied at the right time, according to the built-in biological clock.*

Case Study 3: Research in Primate Language Acquisition

Some researchers claim that humans are not alone in their remarkable use of language. Since the 1950's more and more research is showing that the primates may be capable of learning and manipulating language.

In the early 50's it was thought that of all the primates, chimpanzees were the best equipped intellectually to learn language and so the early research centered on chimps only. The initial results were quite discouraging, however. One chimp managed a spoken vocabulary of four words and that was it. Researchers were forced to concede that chimps could not be taught to talk. But when Beatrice and Allen Gardner observed that chimps in the wild communicate with hand signals, failure turned to success. They decided to teach their first pupil, a one-year-old chimp named Washoe, the gestural language for the deaf, American Sign Language (Ameslan). Within one year and with a vocabulary of ten words, Washoe started to combine signs. She had been taught more *in the context of* more tickling *and then transferred this use to other activities and objects. She invented* gimme tickle *and* open food drink"*to request that the refrigerator be opened. (Fleming, 1974)*

Many other chimps since Washoe have been taught in similar ways and with similar results. Some even began their training as early as one month. Living in fully-equipped stimulus-rich environments with minimal restraint, constant human companionship, plenty of opportunity for games and interaction, and intensive training, they have all learned some form of communication through symbols. Techniques have varied but the results have been quite consistent. While Washoe learned to sign through imitation and prompting, Sarah *earned through conditioning techniques.* Salome *even had a human sister of the same age and human* parents.

Moreover, while it had been thought that only chimps were capable of language, over a six-year period in the 1970's, a researcher named Francine Patterson managed to bring a gorilla Koko *to achieve a vocabulary of 375 signs. In the October 1978 issue of National Geographic, Patterson reported that Koko had learned to respond to and ask questions, to indicate when she felt* happy or sad *and to refer to past and future events. Apparently she even insulted people and lied on occasion.*

If all of this is true, then what of the innatist claim that only humans have an in-built capacity for learning language ? The fact is that not all primate researchers have reached the same startling conclusions and some even question the validity of the Gardners' and others' claims (Seidenberg & Petitto, 1981; Terrace, 1980). Aside from those who criticize the experiments themselves as not being sufficiently well-controlled (Seidenberg & Petitto, 1981), many animal psychologists, linguists and psycholinguists question whether primates actually use the language in the same way that humans do (Savage-Rumbaugh, 1981). Terrace questions whether we can assume that sequences of words are sentences as opposed to rote-learned strings of words. He also questions whether apes ever come to understand the meanings of the elements or the *relationships between the elements, as children do. And finally, Terrace doesn't believe that any of the apes' sentences are truly rule-governed in the way that human children's sentences are.*

In a tightly controlled study on a chimp named Nim Chimpsky *(a word play on the name of linguist Noam Chomsky, the most famous of the* innatists*), Terrace (1980) compared Nim's use of language to that of a child and found important differences. Unlike utterances in child language, Nim's utterances did not increase in length with time, despite his growing vocabulary. And his longer utterances were extremely redundant: "give orange me give eat orange me eat orange give me eat orange give me you" (p. 101). Additionally whereas a child's utterances become increasingly more complex semantically as they grow longer, Nim's longer utterances overlapped to a very large extent with his shorter utterances. But most importantly, Terrace found, through a series of videotaped sessions of Nim and his teachers, that on a social level Nim's conversations were very different from a child's conversation. It was found that only 12% of Nim's utterances were spontaneous, that is , not preceded by a teacher's prompt, whereas for a normal child, the percentage would be much higher. What is significant is that while children frequently talk independently, just for the sake of talking, 88% of Nim's utterances were in response to prompts. His utterances were also much less creative, having more imitations and fewer expansions (of teachers' utterances) than a child's utterances. Nim also interrupted more frequently and showed no awareness of turn-taking.*

All this aside, however, what is striking is that after four to six years of natural exposure to a language a child achieves near mastery of all aspects of the language. After four to six years of natural exposure plus daily intensive training in a language, a chimp achieves — at best — a vocabulary of a few hundred words about a limited range of topics (mostly food and fun activities) with a rudimentary (if any) mastery of the syntactic system. For the most part, apes sign in response to prompts, or to obtain certain objects or activities. The question is: is this very different from the chicken who learns to depress a lever in order to receive grain?

* * *

Day	2
Activity	3 ***The Innatist Position***
Objective	To make clear the biological foundations for the innatist position.
Time	20 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook, page 62
Resources	None required

Procedure

1. Ask the participants to turn to page 62 of their workbook, ***Shakespeare's View of the Critical Period***, to read it, and to comment on Thomas Mowbray's reaction to his exile. What was the playwright's view of language acquisition ?

2. Allow a few minutes for participants to read the excerpt.

For Your Information

Shakespeare evidently assumed that language acquisition after a certain age was impossible.

3. Ask participants to turn to page 64 of their workbook, *The Innatist Position* . Explain that this text is an overview of the theories and research studies which make a case for a biological critical period during which it is easiest to learn language. Among other things, the Critical Period Hypothesis, brain lateralization, and optimal age are discussed. Explain that these readings will help them understand some of the founding principles upon which a good deal of teaching theory was based. A worksheet for note-taking has been provided on page 69 of the Participants' Workbook.

4. If time and energy permit, this text may be divided into five parts and done as a jigsaw reading. Form sub-groups of five, each member takes one part, reads it and presents it to the sub-group.

5 Once sub-groups have finished presenting their parts to their members, in plenary, encourage discussion of how these principles have been influential in language teaching methodology.

*Alternative Procedure

1-2 Follow general procedure.

3 Draw out of the participants what they know and think about:

- the innatist position
- the critical period hypothesis
- lateralization or plasticity theory

4 Point out that a text which summarizes the neurological evidence for each of these positions is printed on page 66 in their workbook, and is suggested take-home reading.

5 In order to proceed with the day, however, it is suggested that they read the summary of the text, which appears on page 63 in their workbook (see page 96, Worshop Leader's Manual).

6 In plenary, ask the participants to discuss the following questions:

- Is Genie's case evidence for the weak or the strong version of the critical period hypothesis? (weak)

- Is the case study of l'enfant sauvage evidence for the weak or the strong version of the critical period hypothesis? (strong)

- How have these positions found expression in language teaching methodologies?

7 Ask the participants to read the full text, page 64, at home, for a more complete understanding of the evidence which has led to these positions.

Shakespeare's View of the Critical Period

King Richard II has just banished Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, telling him he may never return to England from his exile. Mowbray replies:

"The language I have learn'd these forty years,
My native English, now I must forgo;
And now my tongue's use is to me no more
Than an unstringed viol or a harp,
Or like a cunning instrument cas'd up,
Or, being open, put into his hands
That knows no touch to tune the harmony.
Within my mouth you have engaol'd my tongue,
Doubly portcullis'd with my teeth and lips;
And dull unfeeling barren ignorance
Is made my gaoler to attend on me.
I am too old to fawn upon a nurse,
Too far in years to be a pupil now.
What is thy sentence /then/ but speechless death,
Which robs my tongue from breathing native breath ?"

Richard II, Act I, Scene III

For Your Information

The innatist position *is that children are born with an innate ability to discover the underlying rules of a language system. Noam Chomsky, the most famous of the* innatists, *proposed this theory in reaction to the behaviourist theory of language acquisition.*

Eric Lenneberg, another famous innatist, *argued that the language acquisition device works successfully only when it is stimulated at the right time — a time which is referred to as the critical period.*

Two versions of the critical period hypothesis: *The strong version is that a child must acquire a first language by puberty or he or she will never be able to learn from subsequent exposure.* (L'enfant sauvage). *The weak version is that language learning will be more difficult and incomplete after puberty.* (Genie).

Plasticity or lateralization theory; *There is much neurological evidence that each of the two hemispheres of the brain has particular strengths that the other does not have, and that the left hemisphere is largely responsible for language. There is also evidence that the child's brain is more plastic and flexible compared with the adult's brain. If one side of a child's brain is damaged, the other side can compensate and take over for any functions lost. There is evidence that at puberty, the process of firmly establishing a particular function to a particular hemisphere takes place, and the human brain becomes less adaptable for language learning.*

Conclusion: *There seems to be considerable biological evidence to support the weak version of the critical period hypothesis. However, while there may be a critical period for the establisshment of oral skills, there may not be a critical period for the development of other aspects of language. There may be a series of critical periods for different aspects of language. What is clear, however, is that bilogical factors are not enough to explain language learning. The environment seems to be involved in a complex interaction with the bilogical mechanisms.*

The Innatist Position

One of the most fascinating aspects of human development is the ability to learn how to speak. We all watch and listen with absolute fascination as the first coos and gurgles, sounding very much like conversation, are uttered by a six-month old baby. Around the time a child reaches one year old, entire rooms have been known to be silenced when a child first utters the words "bye bye", or "mamma". Indeed, learning a language is an amazing feat — one which has attracted the attention of linguists and psychologists for generations. The crucial question is — how do children accomplish this ? What is it that enables a child not only to learn words, but to put them together in meaningful sentences ? What resources does a child have which enable him or her to do this ?

In this module, we will discuss several proposals which have been offered as explanations of how language is learned. However, this reading will focus our attention on a particular theory of language learning — one which claims that there is a biologically critical period during which it is easiest to learn language. This theory has its roots in linguistics, biology and neurolinguistics. Our discussion of the critical period hypothesis begins with the work of the linguist, Noam Chomsky. He claims that children are biologically programmed for language — that they are born with the ability to learn language. This is known as the innatist theory. Chomsky developed his theory in reaction to the behaviourist theory of learning which claims that children learn language through a process of habit formation — that they imitate the sounds and patterns which they hear around them, receive positive reinforcement for doing so and continue to seek this positive reinforcement by repeating these sounds and patterns until they become habits.

Chomsky attacked the behaviourist theory on the grounds that it failed to recognize the active contribution of the child in the learning process. He argued that the language the child is exposed to in the environment is full of confusing information (e.g. false starts, incomplete sentences, slips of the tongue etc.) and that it does not provide all the information which the child eventually has. He argued strongly that children's minds are not blank slates, to be filled by merely imitating language they hear in the environment. Instead, he claimed that children are born with a special ability to discover for themselves the underlying rules of a language system. According to his theory, this special ability is contained in a language acquisition device. This device is often described as an imaginary black box which exists somewhere in the brain. In this black box are some of the universal features which are found in all known languages, for example, information about word order and basic grammatical relations. For the language acquisition device to work, the child needs access to language data. However, this serves only as a trigger to activate the device. Once it is *activated, the child is able to discover the rules of the language he or she is learning by matching his or her innate knowledge of basic grammatical relationships to the structures of the particular language being learned.*

Another famous scholar, Eric Lenneberg, working within the field of biology, compared learning to talk with learning to walk. Children who, for medical reasons, cannot move about when infants may soon stand and walk if their problems are corrected at the age of a year or so. Similarly, children who can hear but who cannot speak can nevertheless learn language, understanding even complex sentences. Lenneberg went on to observe that there was evidence that this ability to develop normal behaviours and knowledge in spite of certain types of environmental deprivation does not continue indefinitely and that children who have never learned language (because of deafness or extreme isolation) cannot return to normal if these environmental abnormalities go on for too long. He argued that the "language acquisition device", like other biological functions, works successfully only when it is stimulated at the right time — a time which is referred to as the "critical period".

There are two versions of the critical period hypothesis. The strong version is that children must acquire a first language by puberty or they will never be able to learn from subsequent exposure. The weak version is that language learning will be more difficult and incomplete after puberty. Although there are some who still support the strong version of the critical period hypothesis, most researchers maintain the weak version.

The cases of Genie and Victor are relevant to the discussion of the critical period hypothesis. As we learned in our reading in the previous activity, Genie and Victor made some remarkable steps in social behaviour. However, Victor never learned to speak while Genie remained limited in her use of language and in her control of more complex language forms. Genie's case seems to support a weak version of the critical period hypothesis. And Victor's case seems to support a strong version. However, these cases do not conclusively support even the weak version of the critical period hypothesis because the unknown circumstances of their early lives makes it very difficult for us to know what other factors might be contributing to their inability to learn language.

Next, some of the neurological evidence which has been used to support the critical period hypothesis will be presented. But first, a summary of the kinds of evidence which have been used to support Chomsky's innatist position is provided below:

1) Virtually all children successfully learn their native language at a time in life when they would not be able to learn anything else so complicated. (Even children with quite limited intellectual functioning learn quite complex language structures).

2) Children successfully master the structure of their native language or dialect in a variety of conditions — some which would be expected to enhance language development (e. g. caring attentive parents who focus on the child's language) and *some which might be expected to inhibit it (e. g. abusive or rejecting parents). Children achieve different levels of vocabulary, creativity, social grace etc., but virtually all achieve mastery of the structure of the language spoken around them.*

3) The language children are exposed to does not contain examples of all the information which they eventually know.

4) Animals —even the primates — cannot learn to manipulate a symbol system as complicated as the natural language of a three or four-year old human child.

Neurological research and the critical period hypothesis

The critical period hypothesis has also received a great deal of attention in neurolinguistic theory and research. According to the well-known neurolinguist, Wilder Penfield, the child's brain is more plastic compared with that of an adult. After the age of nine, however, «the human brain becomes progressively stiff and rigid for the purposes of language learning.» This process of moving from a plastic-like brain in childhood to a more rigid one at puberty is known as plasticity theory or lateralization theory. But before this is discussed any further, it is important to provide some preliminary information about language and the brain.

The Brain

The brain is a complex organ, consisting of many different parts and performing a variety of complex functions. The two major sections of the brain are the left and right hemispheres. Each hemisphere is thought to have particular strengths that the other does not have. For example, the right hemisphere appears to have a special talent for music and for recognition of complex visual patterns. The left hemisphere appears to have a special analytic ability including language capacities. This does not mean that all functions related to language are located in the left hemisphere and that all functions related to visual processing are in the right hemisphere. On the contrary, there is growing evidence to suggest that both the right and left hemispheres are involved in a wide range of mental processes, but in different ways. If we take language processing as an example, it has been argued that the right hemisphere deals with linguistic input in a holistic and gestalt-like manner, whereas the left hemisphere deals with language input more analytically. Generally speaking, however, there seems to be agreement that each hemisphere has a dominant capacity for certain functions with language primarily located in the left hemisphere.

But how, you many ask, do we know which function is located in which hemisphere? What evidence is there for the claim that the language function is located in the left hemisphere for example ? One source of evidence comes from research with brain damaged individuals. As early as 1861, the well-known neurologist and anthropologist, Paul Broca, showed that a particular speech disorder resulted from damage to a specific area of the left hemisphere. This area of the brain is now known as Broca's area. In fact, all of Broca's patients with speech disorders had left *hemisphere damage only. Over the decades, more research with brain damaged individuals has shown that patients who suffer damage in different areas of the left hemisphere are far more likely to experience speech and language disorders than patients who suffer right hemisphere damage. Results like these provide strong support that for most people, language is a dominant function of the left hemisphere.*

There are several other methods that researchers have used to discover the location of particular language functions in the brain. These studies have not only been done with brain damaged individuals, but with normal subjects as well. However, it is important to note that although sophisticated techniques for investigating language and the brain are developing all the time, research in this area is still in its infancy. Therefore, the results must be considered as preliminary.

Now that we have some information about language and the brain, we are ready to continue with the discussion of some of the neurological research which supports the critical period hypothesis. We will recall that the critical period hypothesis states that there are physical changes at puberty which make the brain less adaptable for language learning. This claim is also based mainly on studies of people who have suffered some kind of language loss as a result of brain damage. These studies have found that a child has the remarkable ability of re-learning a language even if the speech areas of the left hemisphere are severely damaged and in some cases removed. However, as we have already learned, adult learners who suffer similar damage to the left hemisphere do not have the same ability to fully recover language. This offers support for the theory that a child's brain is more plastic and flexible — that it is capable of transferring functions from one hemisphere to another if necessary. This also suggests that in childhood, the precise functions of the brain may not yet be fully established in one hemisphere or another. This helps to explain why children with severely damaged left hemispheres can re-learn language with only the right hemisphere remaining. At puberty, however, the process of firmly establishing a particular function to a particular hemisphere is thought to take place. This process is referred to as lateralization. The theory is that once lateralization is complete, the brain no longer has this flexibility or plasticity. This helps to explain why adults with left hemisphere damage never fully recover their language ability. It is important to point out, however, that there is considerable disagreement about when and how lateralization takes place. There are those who claim lateralization is complete at puberty, others who claim it is fully completed at five years of age. Still others have argued that different aspects of language are lateralized at different times starting from early childhood and going into adulthood.

So what can we conclude about the critical period hypothesis ? First, there does seem to be considerable biological evidence to support the weak version of the critical period hypothesis stating that first-language learning is more difficult and less complete after puberty. The case of Genie and the others which we have read about have provided some evidence for this. However, because of the peculiar nature of these *cases, no firm conclusions can be drawn. In terms of the neurolinguistic evidence, it also seems as if children have an advantage over adults when it comes to recapturing language which is lost through some kind of brain damage. However, these too are special cases of language learning and there is considerable concern about the lack of precision in conducting research with brain damaged cases. For example, in most brain damaged cases, it is not just one area which is damaged but usually a constellation of other areas as well. Injury in some areas may set off damage in others which is not easily detected. If we consider the evidence for the critical period hypotheses in terms of learners' abilities to learn second languages, younger children do seem more capable of achieving native like competence than adults. However, while there may be a critical period for the establishment of oral skills, like pronunciation, there may not be a critical period for the development of other aspects of language. Or, as some researchers have suggested, there may be a series of critical periods for different aspects of language starting in childhood and continuing for many years. Much more research is needed before an answer to these questions is provided. However, what should be clear from this discussion of the critical period hypothesis is that biological factors are not enough to explain language learning. The environment seems to be involved in a complex interaction with the biological mechanisms. And it is in the nature of this interaction where an answer to the question of how language is learned probably lies.*

* * *

The Innatist Position

Part I

Chomsky's innatist position

Language acquisition device: How it works

Part II

Biological evidence for a critical period

Part III

Language and the brain

Part IV

Neurological evidence for the critical period

Part V

Conclusions

Day	2
Activity	4 ***Out of the Mouths of Babes: Interactionist Approaches?***
Objective	To explore the possibility that neither the behaviorist nor the innatist position is a sufficient explanation for language acquisition, and to become familiar with some of the research findings in child language acquisition
Time	45-60 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook, page 70
Resources	Videocassette Recorder and Video Cassette *Out of the Mouths of Babes*

Procedure

1 Introduce the video as a film made for CBC's *The Nature of Things* series, by Jill and Peter de Villiers, two reknowned researchers in the field of first language acquisition.

2 Ask the participants to turn to page 70 of their workbook, *Out of the Mouths of Babes* (see Workshop Leader's Manual page 98 and to preview the discussion questions before viewing the film, and to come back to them after the film.

3 After the film has been shown, briefly go over the discussion questions (see Discussion Questions: Answer Key, Workshop Leader's Manual, page 98) and conclude that evidence of creative construction on the part of young children supports the theory that human beings are equipped with an innate language acquisition device but that in the absence of a normal range of exposure to environmental stimuli, language acquisition can never be complete.

4 Transition to second language
Remind the participants that we've already said that if one does not learn one's first language before puberty, acquisition will never be perfect, BUT, older children and adults CAN and DO learn and the processes are both similar and different.

Discussion Questions: Answer Key

Out of the Mouths of Babes*

1. Who teaches children to talk?

   - *No one actually teaches them. They learn on their own.*

2. When do children develop the ability to discriminate speech sounds — from other sounds in the environment and from each other?

   - *In earliest infancy — perhaps from birth.*

3. What does the narrator (P. de Villiers) say about language development after puberty?

   - *That the ability to acquire language diminishes (atrophies) and is virtually lost after puberty.*

4. What is a holophrase?

   - *A one-word sentence*

5. What is telegraphic speech?

   - *Children's two- or three-word sentences which leave out function words (the, is, in) and inflections.*

6. What are the limitations on a child's ability to imitate language?

   - *They can imitate only what they already have begun to use spontaneously.*

7. Why does a child say *comed* after he had previously used *came* correctly?

   - *He or she first learned* came *as a separate word. When he or she learned how to form regular past tenses, she or he overgeneralized the regular* ed *to an irregular verb.*

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* *Film made for CBC's The Nature of Things series by J. de Villiers and P. de Villiers.*

8. **How does mothers' speech to young children differ from their speech to older children and adults?**

- *It is more repetitive, more correct, contains shorter sentences and may be slower. It tends to be limited to references to the "here and now".*

9. **At about what age, according to J. de Villiers, does a child master the major syntactic structures of language, including negatives and interrogatives?**

- *By age 4. This is a bit too soon to say it's "flawless", but the major structures are well-controlled.*

10. **When do parents correct their children's speech? When do they praise what children say?**

- *They praise and correct for truth value rather than for form.*

11. **Describe the "wug test". What is it used to show?**

- *A tests in which children learn and manipulate nonsense words in a variety of grammatical structures. For example, a child sees a picture of a whimsical creature, and is told it is called a wug. Shown a picture of two of the creatures he is asked to complete the sentence* Now there are two _____. *The objective is to determine whether the child can apply the rule for formation of plural nouns. Successful completion of the task suggests the child can use a structural rule. If we simply hear the child produce correct plurals, we do not know whether these are memorized individual items (as would be the case for an irregular plural) or formed by the use of a rule.*

12. **What point is J. de Villiers making when she discusses the child's acquisition of tag questions?**

- *That children can achieve the same communicative goal with simpler structures. And yet they learn tag questions.*

13. **How do child language researchers demonstrate that young children have difficulty treating language as an object — apart from the meaning it conveys?**

- *One way is by asking them to identify* wrong *or* silly *sentences. For several years, children simply listen for whether the sentence makes some kind of sense in the context. Thus they will accept* juice the drink *but not* drink the chair. *Slightly older children know the first sentence needs to be fixed and that the second is silly but correctly formed. Another sign of the ability to separate form and meaning is the point at which children begin to understand jokes involving the use of ambiguous words.*

14. **What interferes with a child's ability to understand big/little or front/back in the same way as adults?**

- *He or she tends to treat the terms as absolutes or in relation to himself or herself rather than as strictly relative to the context.*

15. **On the basis of the de Villiers' research what can we deduce about the three major theories of language acquisition?**

- *That none of these theories sufficiently explains all aspects of language acquisition.*

Day	2	
Activity	5	**Comparing First and Second Language Acquisition**
Objective	To become familiar with the differences between first and second language acquisition	
Time	30-45 minutes	
References	Participants' Workbook, page 73	
Resources	None required	

Procedure

1 Ask participants to turn to page 73 of their workbook, *Comparing First and Second Language Acquisition* .

2 Ask participants to think about what second language learners have that first language learners do not have. To put it another way, what do older learners have that younger learners do not have; or, what do high school students have that primary school students do not have ?

☞ *Participants may suggest differences like age, motivation, opportunity, etc. Accept these answers, but stress that we've already looked at individual differences, and are looking now for differences which the groups share as a whole. Therefore encourage answers which reflect the fact that L2 learners have: a* ***first language*** *and more* ***cognitive maturity.*** In other words, older learners have more academic and cognitive skills, and a metalinguistic awareness that younger learners do not have.

3 Then ask the participants to discuss what having a first language and cognitive maturity means in practical terms. Attempt to bring out the following points.

1. Having a first language means that the learners already have communication skills and strategies. These include the ability to make use of cognates and L1 morphology, both of which may allow learners to get their message across in the absence of sufficient L2 vocabulary and sentence structure; both may also have the negative effect of interference of L1 syntax and morphology in L2 constructions.

2. Having cognitive maturity allows learners to understand and take part in discussions about language; to analyse, memorize and study language; and to profit from already-established study habits.

4 Ask participants to turn to page 74 of their workbook, *Data: Second Language Learners* (see Workshop Leader's Manual page 103). Explain that the data are examples of interactions within a secondary second language classroom.

5 Work with the whole group on the first data set examining the intereaction for evidence of first language help or interference, and evidence of cognitive maturity.

6 Ask participants to work with a partner to examine the rest of the data sets.

7 When participants have had sufficient time to examine the data and discuss the interactions in pairs or small groups, elicit their responses, give feedback (see Answer Key, Workshop Leader's Manual page 103) distinguishing between instances of L1 interference which help or hinder L2 production. Conclude by indicating that older learners have essentially more information to crack the L2 code.

*Alternative Procedure

1-4 Follow general procedure.

5 In plenary, examine the data for evidence of first language help or interference and evidence of cognitive maturity. Use the Answer Key page 103 to distinguish between instances of interference which hinder second language production. Conclude that older learners have essentially more information to crack the second language code.

Data

Second Language Learners

Examine the following data sets for evidence of L1 interference and cognitive maturity. In each case, determine if the L1 interference helps or hinders communication and what the cognitive academic ability allows the learner to do.

1.

Teacher (referring to a reading):
Why were the two young men handcuffed together? ... Sylvain...

Sylvain: *Uh, the two men youngs, ... the two ... the two youngs men were handcuffed /aenkuhft/ each other ... the one ... was the sheriff and the other ... one a prisoner.*

Answer key

L1 hinders: Francophones transfer French syntax (inverting noun and adjective) and morphology (making the adjective plural)

2.

Teacher: *What is the "Star-Spangled Banner"?*

Student: *The song of national in United States.*

Teacher: *Right ... The national anthem of the United States.*

Answer Key

L1 helps: In the absence of the term *anthem*, a translation from the French *chant national* allows learner to communicate the message.

3. (Working on a dramatization of a story in which one camper disappears in the woods. Teacher is having trouble getting students to inject emotion into their role playing.)

Teacher: *Simon, you be Mark. Daniel, you be Tom.*

Simon: *Ron's disappeared. What should we do?* (Reading with no expression)

Teacher: *Oh come on! Your best friend has disappeared ... You say: Ron's disappeared ... What should we do ... Leave him.*»(Exaggerated lack of expression)

(Simon reads again with same lack of expression as before)

Teacher: *Isn't this exciting? Oh Oh Oh* (pretends to be yawning) *Alright someone who's more emotional ... Guylaine, what are they talking about?*

Guylaine: *Disparition?*

Teacher: *Disappearance ... of who or what?*

Answer key

L1 helps: Allow for communication in the absence of English terminology.

4. **Teacher:** *My boyfriend has fifteen years old ... Nancy?*

Nancy: *It's uh ... correct?*

Teacher: *Gaston?*

Gaston: *is?*

Teacher: *Is fifteen years old ... Why Gaston?*

Gaston: *Because you can't hold fifteen years?*

Teacher: *Right. The expression in English is to be years old. I am fifteen years old. She is twenty years old. It's not have. In French your expression is have but in English the expression is to be. I am five years old.*

Answer Key

L1 hinders: French use of "avoir" with reference to age interferes with acquisition of English "to be". Cognitive maturity: Allows analysis and comparison of the differences between the two languages.

5. (During a lesson on forming plurals in Grade 5)

Teacher: *Number one... Jim's boots are brown... Louise?*

Louise: *Brown takes an "s"... It's correct?*

Teacher: *... Who can tell me why brown doesn't take an "s"?*

Student: *Because uh... You have uh... one pairs of boots?*

Teacher: *No, that's not the reason, Luc?*

Luc: *When you have an adjective... we don't put "s"*

Teacher: *Right... in English... we do not accord... or make the agreement between adjectives and nouns.*

Answer Key

Cognitive Maturity: With younger learners we can't talk about language like this.

6.

Teacher: *What's the difference between* to wander *and* to wonder*?*

Student: *To* wonder *is to ask a person a question... and* to wander *is to...uh... to walk nowhere.*

Answer Key

Cognitive maturity: Ability to define words and to contrast pronunciation and spelling.

7.

Teacher: *Money isn't everything... What does that expression mean? Money isn't everything ... Behind the meaning...*

Stephane: *Well, it's means that... uh... it means that they don't, the people who lives there don't think just about money, and they make some more money, and they thinks about something else.*

Answer Key

Cognitive maturity : Ability to paraphrase.

Unpublished data from research project titled *Interactions among learners, teachers, texts and methods of English as a Second Language*, directed by Patsy M. Lightbown and Bruce Barkman, and funded by The Office of the Secretary of State of Canada, 1978.

Day	2
Activity	6 ***Second Language Acquisition Theories***
Objective	To become familiar with the theoretical positions on second language acquisition and their influence on materials, methodologies and classroom practices.
Time	30-35 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook, page 77
Resources	None required

Procedure

1 Ask the participants if they think that the general theories of language acquisition that we examined earlier (e.g., behaviorism, innatism and interactionism) work as well for second language as they do for first language. Or should we be refining the theories (theories guide research and research results in turn lead to revision of theories) to better predict or describe second language acquisition?

2 Point out that as a result of the research and findings in the area of second language acquisition, a number of theories specific to second language acquisition have been proposed, and that in this activity we will be looking at these theories and how each has found its expression in the methodology for teaching second languages.

3 Ask the participants to form groups of three or four and to turn to page 77 of their workbook (see Workshop Leader's Manual, page 109), *Second Language Acquisition Theories*.

4 Bring their attention to the fact that there are three main theories:

I Contrastive analysis
II Creative construction
III Cognitive and skill-learning

5 The second of these theories, creative construction, is exemplified by Stephen Krashen's *Monitor Model* (II A), which is the most comprehensive of these theories. Each of the hypothesis which constitute Krashen's model (II A 1-5) is explained briefly.

6 Ask the participants to read the parts of the text one at a time, stopping after each and discussing how that theory or hypothesis has found its expression in the methodology for teaching second languages. Discussion questions follow each part of the text in their workbook and should guide their discussion. Encourage the participants to be as critical or creative as they wish, letting their discussion take any direction they please. This activity is meant to be free and interactive as possible.

7 When all groups seem to have exhausted their ideas on each position, ask them:

- What do you think of Krashen's assertion that learned knowledge cannot turn into acquired knowledge in the sense that it can never become part of the speaker's automatic and fluent repertoire?
- Which of the three theories seems "right"?

8 Conclude that although the creative construction theory and the cognitive and skills-learning theory are more comprehensive and consistent with the modern view of second language learning, contrasting analysis has its merits and, in fact, was very instrumental in bringing about major discoveries and changes which led to the more comprehensive positions.

9 Point out that by now the participants should have a much better appreciation of the relationship between research and theory in the evolution of second language teaching methodology.

*Alternative Procedure 1

1-3 Follow general procedure.

4 This text could be done as a jigsaw reading with members of sub-groups reading one part each and presenting it to the other members of the sub-group and then discussing the questions within the group.

However, it is felt that, if time permits, the discussion would be more beneficial if each participant has read each selection himself/herself. In other words, the alternative procedure is only advised if the general procedure is felt to be unsuitable for some reason.

5-6 Follow general procedure

*Alternative Procedure 2

1-3 Follow general procedure

4 In plenary, summarize each of the positions, one at a time, stopping after each to discuss the questions and anything else that comes up with the group as a whole.

5-6 Follow general procedure.

Second Language Acquisition Theories

I. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

This model of second language learning is called the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis but it is really part of the behaviorist theory or model of second language learning. The basic supposition is that language development consists of the acquisition of a set of habits; the second language learner starts with the habits associated with his first language grammar. Where there are similarities between the two languages, the learner will learn target language structures with ease; where there are differences, the learner will have difficulty. Errors are seen as first language habits interfering with the acquisition of second language habits and the process of learning the second language is thought to be a matter of overcoming old habits (L1 habits) with new ones (L2 habits). However, we now know that not all errors which are predicted by Contrastive Analysis are made. Furthermore, data analyses have revealed that learners make many errors which are not predictable on the bases of Contrastive Analysis. For example, learners simplify structures in the target language just as children do: She want pudding too. *Finally, the model would predict that where differences exist, errors would go both ways on the same structure:* Le chien a mangé le *and* The dog it ate. *In fact, this is not always the case. Learners sometimes find difficult those things which are very similar but not identical. Contrastive Analysis proved to be inadequate as a predictive measure, and in the last twenty years, a number of other theories have been proposed.*

Discussion Questions

- Name a few classroom activities which seem to be based on the assumptions inherent in this theory.
- If all classroom activities were based on this theory, what would be the implications for the homogeneous (entirely francophone) classroom?
- What would be the implications for the heterogeneous (mixed first languages) classroom?
- Would a methodology based on this theory give all learners equal opportunity or would certain types of learners be advantaged?

II. Creative Construction

A theory or model which has become increasingly popular is that of second language acquisition as a process of creative construction by which a learner constructs internal representations of the language being learned. These representations result from a combination of the learner's internal processing mechanisms and environmental exposure to the second language. Moreover, these internal representations slowly develop in the direction of the full second language system in predictable stages. Most of the evidence for this model has come from the analysis of learners' errors at various points in their second language acquisition and the order or sequence in which certain structures are acquired. What is distinctive about this model is that it posits internal processing strategies which operate on language input without any direct dependence on the learner actually producing the language. That is , the learner need not actually speak or write in order to learn language. According to this model, acquisition takes place internally as the learner reads and hears samples of the language that he can understand. The speech and writing which the learner eventually produces is seen as an outcome of the acquisition rather than as a causal factor. Learners' oral or written production are useful in contributing to SLA only in so far as they allow the learner to participate in communicative situations.

The most comprehensive creative construction theory is Stephen Krashen's Monitor Model (1977).

A. The Monitor Model

Stephen Krashen, is a series of papers and books, has developed an overall theory of second language acquisition which attempts to bring together research findings from a number of diverse areas. Five central hypotheses constitute The Monitor Model, and Krashen claims that research findings from a number of different domains are consistent with the five basic hypotheses. They are: (1) The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis; (2) The Monitor Hypothesis; (3) The Natural Order Hypothesis; (4) The Input Hypothesis; and (5) The Affective Filter Hypothesis. It will be seen that what makes this theory attractive to practitioners is that it seeks to explain everything about SLA; it is intuitively appealing; and it has immediate implications for classroom practice. In fact, Krashen's writing has been very influential in strengthening the recent focus on communicative language teaching in North America. On the other hand, the theory has also been seriously criticized for failing to meet certain minimum standards necessary in scientific research and writing. Each of the five hypotheses, and its limitation, will be discussed.

1. The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

According to Krashen, there are two ways for adult second language learners to approach learning a second language: they may acquire it or they may learn it. Essentially, we acquire as we engage in meaningful interaction in the second *language, much the same way that children pick up their first language — with no attention to form. We* learn, *on the other hand, via a conscious process of study and attention to form and error correction, most typically in formal language classrooms. For Krashen, acquisition is by far the more important process. He asserts that it is only through acquisition that a second language can become natural to the speaker. Further, he asserts that learning cannot turn into acquisition, citing as evidence for this that many speakers are quite competent without ever having learned rules (i. e., they acquired), while other speakers may* know *rules but continue to break them. Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult to detect which system,* acquisition *or* learning, *is at work. To test this hypothesis, each of these abstractions would need to be defined, controlled and manipulated experimentally, and this has not been done.*

Discussion Question

- What types of activities aim at acquisition? What types of activities aim at learning?

2.The Monitor Hypothesis

Krashen has been quite specific about how each of the above systems works. The acquired system acts to initiate the speaker's utterances and is responsible for fluency and intuitive judgements about correctness. The learned system, on the other hand, acts only as an editor or monitor, *making changes and polishing what the acquired system has produced. Moreover, Krashen has specified three conditions necessary for monitor use: sufficient time, focus on form, and knowing the rule. Thus, writing is more conducive to monitor use than is speaking, where the focus is on content and not on form. He maintains that knowing the rules only helps the speaker polish what he has acquired via real communication, and that the focus of language teaching should therefore be communication and not rule-learning. The obvious weakness in this hypothesis is that it is very difficult to show evidence of Monitor use. In any given utterance, it is impossible to determine what has been produced by the acquired system and what is the result of Monitor use.*

Discussion Questions

- If writing is more conducive to monitor use than speaking is, what are the implications for classroom practice and management?
- Would the same difference apply to reading and listening? Again, what are the implications.

3. The Natural Order Hypothesis

This hypothesis states that we acquire the rules of a language in a predictable sequence. Some rules are acquired early while some rules are acquired late; contrary to intuition, the rules which are easiest to state or to learn are not necessarily the first to be acquired. Krashen points out that the English rule for forming the simple present third person singular— add an s — couldn't be easier to learn and yet is very frequently broken. Further, he asserts, the natural order is independent of the order in which rules have been taught (Krashen, 1985). Most of the evidence for this hypothesis comes from the morpheme studies, or studies which examine children's speech for accuracy of certain grammatical morphemes (mostly noun and verb endings such as plural -s and past tense -ed in English). In the next unit of this module, we will be looking at Orders of Second Language Acquisition, the research findings, the limitations, and the evidence (or lack of it) for Krashen's hypothesis.

Discussion Question

- Would this hypothesis predict that we should be ordering or grading a syllabus structurally ?

4. The Input Hypothesis

Krashen asserts that we acquire language in only one way — by receiving comprehensible input— by understanding messages. If the input contains forms and structures just beyond the learner's current mastery of the language, then comprehension and acquisition will occur. In other words, if the input is roughly tuned to the learner's mastery and needs, then he will progress along the natural order without anyone deliberately teaching the next structure along the continuum. Krashen cites many varied lines of evidence for this hypothesis, most of which appeal to intuition, but which have never been substantiated with real hard evidence. In his later writing (1985), Krashen admits that comprehensible input is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for acquisition.

Discussion Question

- Is it possible to base a syllabus for a second language classroom on this hypothesis

5. The Affective Filter Hypothesis

The affective filter is seen as playing a central role in language acquisition. Affect refers to such things as motives, needs, attitudes and emotionals states. The affective filters is an imaginary screen set up by individuals to filter incoming language. A *learner who is tense, angry, anxious, or bored will screen out input, making it unavailable for acquisition. Thus, depending on the learner's state of mind or disposition, the filter limits what he attends to and what he will acquire. The affective filter determines how quickly the language will be learned. The filter will be* up or *operating when the learner is stressed, self-conscious or unmotivated. It will be* down *when the learner is relaxed and intent on integration. It is generally agreed that second language acquisition is very much affected by affective factors.*

In summary, the Monitor Model is the most comprehensive model of second language acquisition yet proposed. In the sense that it attempts to explain a diverse array of phenomena in SLA and thus invites practitioners to test its hypotheses and improve on the theory, it makes a real contribution to the field. Unfortunately, the theory is unclear in places, the terms are vague and the empirical basis is weak.

Discussion Question

- How does the affective filler respond in audiolingual activities? in communicative activities? in teacher-centered activities? in learner-centered activities?

III. Cognitive and Skill-learning Theories

The creative construction model posits language learning independent of productive skills. Theoretically, a person could learn a language without ever uttering a word. However, this is not the assumption underlying most language teaching methodology. When we give learners practice and drill in a language, we assume that this productive activity helps the learners to internalize the structure in question, and to arrive at the point where they can produce it without conscious effort.

The skill-learning model is based on this assumption that productive activity aids language acquisition. Further, this productive activity has both cognitive and behavioral aspects. The cognitive aspect is that which is engaged in the creative construction process — internalizing a representation of the language (grammar, etc.). The behavioral aspect is the automation of that representation.

The essential difference between the creative construction model and the cognitive skills model is that in the latter, learning is a step-by-step assimilation of parts of system and is responsive to conscious guidance and training; learning is result of conscious effort. In creative construction, acquisition is subconscious. Still learning theory asserts that to look at language learning as all conscious or all subconscious *is misleading. "Between the most subconscious processes of acquisition* at one extreme and the most conscious forms of learning at the other, it would probably be more realistic to think in terms of a continuum, in which subconscious and conscious processes are mingled to varying degrees."(Littlewood, 1984, p.80)*

Discussion Question

- What are the major differences between creative construction theory and cognitive and skills-learning theory?

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* Acquisition *and* Learning *are the two terms which Stephen Krashen uses to make this distinction.*

Day	2
Activity	7 ***Concluding Remarks***
Objective	To summarize the activities of the day and to assign the take-home reading and assignment
Time	15 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook, page 84
Resources	None required

Procedure

1 Conclude the day by reiterating that research findings in the area of first language acquisition have shed a lot of light on the second language acquisition process.

2 Announce that in the next unit of the Language Acquisition module we will be looking at learner language: the errors and developmental stages in the language which learners produce.

3 Ask participants to turn to page 84 of their workbook, *Concluding remarks*.

4 Remind the group that Activity 3, *The Innatist Position* is suggested take-home reading.

5 Stress that in this, as in all of the modules, it would be helpful to review the materials in the current workshop immediately prior to the next workshop so that some continuity may be gained. In fact, a review of the text in Activity 6, *Theories of Language Learning* will enhance their appreciation and understanding of the materials presented in Day 3, *Learner Language and Developmental Stages*.

6 Applied Assignment
Ask the participants to pay close attention to their own language teaching practices over the next few weeks. Ask them to focus on a few of the methods, activities, books or materials which they use frequently (both those that work well and those that don't seem to work as well). Ask them to think about which theory underlies the design of each. Ask them to bring a few samples to the next unit of the module and to be prepared to discuss each in terms of what its underlying principles are, why it seems to work or why it doesn't seem to work.

The first half-hour of Day 3 will be devoted to exploring their reflections on theories and their own classroom practices and materials.

LEARNER LANGUAGE AND DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES IN "NATURAL" AND CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS

DAY 3

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* This indicates that an alternative procedure is provided.
** Please refer to Errata page 300.

Objectives of Day 3

- ***To become familiar with the errors and developmental stages which are characteristic of "natural" and classroom learner language***

- ***To become familiar with the internal processes and environmental characteristics believed to contribute to the structure of learner language***

At the end of the session, the participants will:

- be familiar with the concept of learner language
- be able to differentiate between errors which are the result of learning a first language, and errors which are the result of language development regardless of first language
- understand that errors can be seen as reflecting language learning processes and that they play an important role in the language development process
- be familiar with developmental sequences in "natural" first and second learner language
- be familiar with the differences between "natural" and instructional language learning environments

List of References and Resources

1. Chalk and chalkboard; or overhead projector and acetates; or large writing tablet and felt markers
2. Workshop Leader's Manual
3. Participants' workbook for Day 3
4. Cassette recorder and tape for Activity 4

Recommended Readings for Participants

Lightbown, P.M. 1983. "Core ESL in Québec: What results can we expect?" *Dialogue: A Newsletter on the Teaching of English and French as Second Languages*. Vol.2,no.1, The Council of Ministers of Education: Canada. 1983, pp.1,4.5,6.

Text, Activity 7: "Natural" First and Second Language Orders of Acquisition, Workshop Leader's Manual, pages 251-257.

Recommended Readings for Workshop Leader

Lightbown, P.M. 1983. "Core ESL in Québec: What results can we expect?" *Dialogue: A Newsletter on the Teaching of English and French as Second Languages*. Vol.2,no.1, The Council of Ministers of Education: Canada. 1983, pp.1,4.5,6.

Corder, S.P. "The Significance of Learners Errors". *IRAL*, Vol. v/4, 1967, published by Julius Groos Verlag, Heigelberg.

Day	3	
Activity	1	***Transition From Theories to Learner Language***
Objective	To provide a link between the theories of language learning and the data which illustrate the language learning process	
Time	20 minutes	
References	None required	
Resources	None required	

Procedure

☞ *This activity is meant to provide a transition and should not exceed the 20 minutes allotted.*

1 Remind the participants that at the end of the last unit of this module (Day 2 — Theories) they were asked to focus on their own teaching and the materials and programs with which they have worked, and to think about how the evolution in theories of second language learning has influenced trends in language teaching methodology.

2 Ask the participants to turn to page 90 in their workbook, Activity 1, *From Theories to Learner Language*. Point out that a brief summary of each of the major theoretical positions has been included to refresh their memories. Go over each of these with the participants (see Workshop Leader's Manual page 123).

3 Next, bring their attention to the list of materials on page 91 and the list of classroom activities in their workbook (see Workshop Leader's Manual pages 123-124), and ask the participants to say which of the above theories has influenced the design of each.

4 Then ask if any of the participants can add materials or examples of teaching techniques to the list and say which theory is reflected in each.

☞ *At this point, if any participant has brought examples to class (as they were asked to do in the Applied Assignment at the end of Day 2), encourage him/her to illustrate how the relevant theory is manifested in the materials. If no one has brought any materials to class, conclude that any of the materials recently approved by the MEQ reflect creative construction and minimize the influence of behaviorism or contrastive analysis.*

5 Then make the transition from Day 2: *Theories* to Day 3: *Language Learning Process*. Inform the participants that today we'll be looking at learner language for evidence in support of any of the three major theories. Tell them that in fact learner errors were what caused psycholinguists to question the assumptions inherent in behaviorist theory.

Theories of Second Language Acquisition

Behaviorism: Language learning is simply a matter of imitation and habit formation, replacing old (L1) habits with new (L2) habits; errors are seen as interference from the first language (Contrastive Analysis).

Innatism: All human beings are equipped with a language learning capability which, if stimulated at the appropriate time, will lead to language acquisition. This device is capable of using minimal input in discovering the rules of the target language.

Creative Construction: The learner constructs internal representations of the L2 as a result of the interaction between his or her innate language learning ability and environmental exposure to the L2. Stephen Krashen's Monitor Model is the most comprehensive example of this theory.

Cognitive and Skill-learning Theories: Productive activity, which has both cognitive and behavioral aspects, aids language acquisition. The cognitive aspect is that which is engaged in the creative construction process — internalizing a representation of the language (grammar, etc.). The behavioral aspect is the automation of that representation.

Some Familiar Textbooks

Elementary	*Jigsaw*
	Let's Find Out
	Look, Listen & Learn
	Sam on Radio 3-2-1
	Yes ! English for Children
	Others
Secondary, Cycle 1	*Connections*
	Lado English Series
	Shaping Up
	Take One / Take Two
	What's on?
	Others
Secondary, Cycle 2	*Alternatives*
	Challenges
	Flight 314 / Flight 414
	Lado English Series
	Special Edition I / Special Edition II
	Take Action / Take a Look
	Ticket to English
	Others

Classroom Activities

The following activities have been used in second language classes for years. Which theory or model(s) of second language acquisition would justify their usefulness?

Activity	Justifying Theory
• Singing songs	
• Translating sentences	
• Memorizing vocabulary lists	
• Role play • Scripted • Unscripted	
• Listening to news broadcasts	
• Writing to pen pals	
• Playing "20 questions"	
• Reading comic strips	
• Repeating after the teacher or tape recorder	
• Learning grammar rules	
• Reading stories with dictionary	
• Memorizing dialogues	
• Conversing with native speakers	
• Conversing with each other	
• Doing crossword puzzles	
• Information gap activities such as puzzle construction mystery solution	
• Close tests	
• Constructing sentences from scrambled words	
• Finding and/or correcting errors in a spoken or written text	
• Minimal pair drills	
• Studying word formation rules	
• Examining sentences for evidence of "interference" errors.	

Day	3
Activity	2 ***The Concept of Learner Language***
Objective	To introduce the concept of learner language
Time	20 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook, page 93
Resources	None required

Procedure

1. Ask participants to turn to page 94 of their workbook, *The Concept of Learner Language* (see Workshop Leader's Manual page 126). This is a brief text which introduces some of the concepts associated with the features and functions of learner language.

2. Ask the participants to read the text silently.

3. When the participants have finished reading the text, reiterate that learner language is a separate linguistic system believed to reflect the language learning process and that errors are an essential part of the process.

The Concept of Learner Language

As we learned in the previous activity on theories of language learning, there really isn't enough evidence for the argument that children learn language through repetition, reinforcement and conditioning. On the contrary, we have seen that a large number of utterances produced by children are not like the kind of utterances produced by children are not like the kind of utterances that adult speakers of the language produce. For example, where would children hear such utterances as: all gone sticky or What the dollie have? Utterances such as these seem to be more easily explained in terms of the child operating his or her own system — a system with its own rules which are not part of the adult code. But how much do we know about this system? What can an utterance like No the sun shining? tell us about the process of learning language?

A number of studies have examined children's language not from the perspective of the adult's linguistic system, but in terms of its own system. These studies have shown how children develop their language until it gradually becomes more like the adult code. One of the first stages which has been described for the early speech of children is called telegraphic. This speech doesn't have many of the small words, like prepositions and articles or inflections (e.g., the -ed *marker for the past tense). It's called telegraphic because this language is very much like the language adults use when sending telegrams, where it's economical to use as few words as possible. Telegraphic speech has different stages. The earliest stage consists of one-word utterances. Later the child starts producing two-word utterances. For example, a child says more page when he or she wants an adult to continue reading, or allgone outside after closing a door.*

Research has also shown that a child's knowledge of the grammatical system is built up in gradual steps. For example, inflections such as the ing of the present continuous tense or the ed *of the past tense are not acquired at the same time, but in sequence. Furthermore, it seems that the process of acquiring certain grammatical features follows similar patterns in children across different learning conditions. We will be discussing several aspects of grammatical development later in this module. However, what is important to remember from the discussion so far is that child language is not viewed as an incorrect version of the adult system, but as a system in its own right with its own rules and logic. And as the child continues to receive linguistic input and test his or her hypotheses about how the language system works, he or she is able to revise his or her system in ways which gradually develop towards the system of an adult.*

But, what about second language learning? Does it evolve in similar ways ? Do second language learners develop their own language system in much the same way that first language learners do? Until the late 60s, most people regarded second language learners' speech as an incorrect version of the target language. Furthermore, this incorrect speech was considered a direct result of interference from the learner's first language. A process known as contrastive analysis was developed to identify differences between the first and second language and to predict areas of potential error. So, for example, one could predict that a speaker of French would be likely to express the idea of being cold as I have cold in English because of the way this meaning is expressed in his or her first language J'ai froid. This notion of interference has a central place in behaviorist accounts of language learning.

But, as we have already learned, there have been several criticisms of this theory. One of the major attacks comes from a large number of empirical studies which set out to examine learner language in depth. These studies found that the errors produced by second language language learners could not be explained only in terms of first language interference. On the contrary, many of these studies provided evidence that the majority of errors produced by second language learners seemed to be more related to the language being learned and showed a remarkable similarity to the kinds of utterances produced by first language learners.

These findings suggest that second language learners can also be viewed as actively constructing rules from the data they encounter and adapting these rules in the direction of the target-language system. As a result, researchers in second language learning began to take a different approach to analyzing learners errors. This approach, known as error analysis, involves a detailed description and analysis of the kinds of errors second language learners produce in an attempt to discover how learners process language data. This approach differs considerably from contrastive analysis in that it does not set out to predict errors on the basis of interference from the mother tongue. Rather, it seeks to discover and describe the different kinds of errors in an effort to understand how learners are processing the second language data. In this way, error analysis views the speech of second language learners as a system in its own right — one which is rule-governed and systematic and very much like the system of first language learners. This system is referred to as interlanguage — a system which exists between the first and second language which is continually evolving as learners receive more input and revise their hypotheses about how the second language system works. In the activities which follow, we will look at the different kinds of errors learners produce. We will also look at some of the different ways in which learners' errors have been classified.

* * *

Day	3
Activity	3 ***Learners' Errors Discovered***
Objective	To discover the difference between errors which are the result of having a first language, and errors which are the result of language development regardless of the first language
Time	20 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook, page 96
Resources	None required

Procedure

Part One

1 **Ask participants to organize themselves into groups of three or four and to examine the utterances on page 96, Part I, *Errors Produced by Native Speakers of French*, for evidence of interference from French.**

2 **Elicit responses, using the suggested Answer Key.**

3 **Finally ask participants if they can think of other errors which seem to be interference errors.**

4 **Go on to Part 2, page 130.**

Part I

Errors Produced by Native Speakers of French[*]

a) The little boy who erase the board is like Pinocchio.
b) She ate very early her breakfast.
c) Will you make him to stop that ?
d) It's three hour and the school is finish.
e) What that is ? What this is ?
f) Why you don't like me ?
g) He has thirteen years.
h) He pulling the rope.
i) The childrens don't like that.
j) There's two girl and two boy.
k) The house of my mother is big.

Answer Key

The above errors are all made by francophones. Francophones learning English routinely omit the third person singular *s*, make preposition errors, mix up English word order, fail to invert questions and forget the plural *s*. At first glance, we think that these errors result from the influence of French. But are they exclusive to francophones ? In fact, only a few are. Only items d ,g and k are clear examples of interference from French, and they are also typical of the errors which speakers of the other Roman languages make. But a look at Part II, *Errors Produced by Speakers of Other Languages* will show that most of the above errors are developmental — that is, they are a part of the natural course of language development.

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[*] Unpublished data provided by P. M. Lightbown (Concordia University)

Part Two

1 Ask participants to turn to page — of their workbook, Part II, *Errors Produced by Speakers of Other Languages* (see Workshop Leader Manual page —).

2 Give them a few minutes to look at the errors, and to compare the kinds of errors speakers of other languages make. Compare their answers to the ones provided in the Answer Key.

Part II

Errors Produced by Speakers of Other Language

a. In the morning he wake up and go to school just like all the other boys. (Italian L1)

b. At day, he has to stay at his desk. (Farsi L1)

c. I like very much films about war. (Hebrew L1)

d. How you can see it ? (Arabic L1)

e. (Comparing country to city) I prefer the country because I can have both side. (Japanese L1)

Answer Key

Speakers of first languages other than French also:
a) omit the third person singular *s*
b) make preposition errors
c) mix up English word order
d) fail to invert questions
e) forget the plural *s*

3 Conclude that if speakers of first languages other than French make some of the same errors that French speakers make, clearly not all errors made by L2 learners are interference from the L1. Many errors are «developmental» or a function of the idiosyncracies of the target L2 (like *children* instead of *childs*). In other words, many errors are the same errors which child L1 learners make (hypothesis-testing), and seem to be a part of the natural course of language development.

Day	3	
Activity	4	*Learners' Errors Classified*
Objective	To demonstrate that errors can be seen as reflecting language learning processes	
Time	30-45 minutes	
References	Participants' Workbook, page 98	
Resources	Tape #3, *Error Classification Answer Key*	

Procedure

1 Introduce the concept of *error analysis* as an attempt on the part of researchers to understand the language learning process and the strategies the learner employs in attempting to decode and encode the new language.

2 Ask participants to turn to page 98 in their workbook, *Error Classification* (see Workshop Leader's Manual page 131). Explain that a number of applied linguists have come up with classifications for the purpose of analyzing errors and that the following is one possible classification:

Error Classification

1. **Interference**: (interlingual, transfer) errors which are a result of L1 interference; (e.g. I prefer the book with the cover blue)
2. **Developmental**: (intralingual) errors which are a result of an overgeneralization or a simplification of L2 rules; (e. g. , They wants to speak but they can't)
3. **Transfer of training** (Selinker, 1972): errors which are a result of training; (e.g., She's have everything she wants)
4. **Other**: errors which are not easily identified as one of the other varieties of error; (e. g. , *train road* instead of *train tracks*)

3 Go over each class and examples with the group. Reiterate the *developmental-interference* distinction. (See *For Your Information*)

For Your Information

***Developmental** errors are errors which are typical of "natural" first language acquisition.*

***Interference** errors are errors which result from interference from the speaker's first language.*

4 Ask participants to turn to page 94 *Error Classification Worksheet* (see below). Explain that the worksheet has a variety of errors produced by L2 learners and that their task is to classify each error by circling 1, 2, 3, or 4.

5 Explain to participants that they will be listening to a taped analysis of the above errors during which the speaker will discuss the various error types. Ask participants to listen to the error classification and to check their own answers against it.

6 Turn on the taped answer key and discussion. When it has finished, ask the participants what this view of error can contribute to language teaching.

- Example of questions:
  What is significant about learners' errors?
  What are the implications for the language classroom?

See answer key for implications.

Answer Key

Error Classification Worksheet

	1	2	3	4
1. They rided down the mountain and waited for him		√		
2. I have twelve years old	√			
3. He is speaks French		√		
4. Who can Ted sees ?			√	
5. The bandit stole the toys of Santa	√			
6. I am going to hockey practice every Monday				√
7. The cat was running after two mouses.		√		
8. He's have one brother			√	
9. The cowboy tries to make the horse go, but the horse doesn't want	√			
10. I have lived here since three months				√

Implications: Learner errors are evidence of a developing system. They are an indication of the learner's ability. They inform the teacher as to what he or she is ready for.

*Alternative Procedure

1 Once the participants have classified the errors you may wish to check their answers with the ones provided in the answer key, rather than using the tape .

2 However, as you go along give minimal information explaining the correct answers

Answer Key

# 2-5-9 :	Interference (interlingual) • Verb *avoir* (# 2) • formation of possessive (#5) • *vouloir* stands alone in French; no *to* is required;
# 1-4-7 :	Developmental Use of knowledge of the second language to organise language data : • verbs are formed with *ed* in the past (# 1) • 3rd person syntax takes an *s* (# 3) • extension of the plural rule(# 7)
# 3-6-8 :	Transfer of training Faulty comprehension of rules and distinctions in the second language; in this case the present continuous may have been over emphasised in instruction and taught in isolation from other tenses.
# 10:	Other It is not always possible to determine the source of a particular error.

3 Conclude that although it is difficult to analyse errors, it does help to understand how the learner is cracking the code of the language being learned.

☞ *You may allow discussion among the participants encouraging them with questions such as "How can this view of error contribute to language teaching?" and "What are the implications for the language classroom?"*

Answer Key and Discussion of Error Types

You have just tried to place different errors on page 99 of your workbook into four categories. Let's examine your categorization of these errors beginning with the ones you classified as interlingual.

Interlingual/Interference

Did you classify numbers 2, 5 and 9 as interlingual errors ? All three fall into this category. As you will recall, interlingual errors, often referred to as interference errors, are those in which the learner uses rules from the mother-tongue as a means of organizing the second language data. So, in number 2 we have an example of a francophone learner of English saying I have twelve years old *using the mother-tongue use of* avoir *(to have) instead of* être *(to be) which is required in English. Number 5 is another example of a learner transferring rules from French to English. In this case they are rules about the formation of the possessive leading the learner to produce* The bandits stole the toys of Santa *instead of* The bandits stole Santa's toys. *Similarly, in number 9, the francophone learner incorrectly assumes that, since the verb* vouloir *can stand alone in French, he can transfer* ne veut pas *into English by writing* The cowboy tries to make the horse go, but the horse doesn't want. *In English however, the equivalent verb is not* want *but* want to, *a form which sounds very strange to a francophone.*

It makes perfect sense for learners to transfer knowledge from their first language because it means that they do not have to start from zero when learning a second language. Knowledge about a first language provides the learner with a rich source of information because of the similarities that languages share. Now let's have a look at the examples of intralingual errors on your sheet.

Intralingual/Developmental

Did you classify numbers 1,4 and 7 as intralingual errors ? As you have already learned, intralingual errors, also referred to as developmental errors, are similar to interference errors in the sense that they too are evidence that learners are relying on previous knowledge of language in order to create new language. However, in the case of intralingual errors, learners use their knowledge of the second language as a means of organizing language data. In number 1 for example, They rided down the mountain and waited for him, *the learner created a wrong structure based on his experience with other structures of the target language. That is , the learner already* *knew the rule for forming the past tense with the-ed inflection. This let him predict that a verb can be put into the past tense by adding -ed. This rule worked with the verb* wait *because it is a regular verb. However, it did not work with the irregular verb* ride *which takes the form* rode *in the past tense. When a learner does this, the process is referred to as overgeneralization. In number 4,* Who can Ted sees, *we have another example of a learner overgeneralizing a rule in the target language. In this case it is a rule for the placement of an -s on the 3rd person singular in declarative sentences — one which does not apply in interrogative sentences. Again, in number 7, the learner is extending the plural 's rule to a noun which is an exception to that rule as in* The cat was running after two mouses.

Transfer of training

Which errors did you place in the category of transfer of training? Numbers 3, 6 and 8? It's not surprising if you had difficulty deciding which errors to place here because this category is really a sub-category of intralingual errors. That is, these errors are due in part to faulty comprehension of rules and distinctions in the second language. However, because these faulty comprehensions are often the result of poor gradation of teaching items or the overteaching of certain grammatical forms, some researchers have found it useful to categorize them as separate group. As you can see, the errors in 3, 6, and 8 all reflect a problem with distinguishing the present continuous tense from the simple present tense. Some researchers have claimed that learners have trouble making this distinction because the present continuous tense which is usually introduced early in instruction (particularly in traditional structure-based programs) is often over-emphasized and taught in isolation from other tenses. It is argued that such instruction does not provide learners with an understanding of the different functions and forms of tense use and that this leads to the overuse of particular forms in learner language. Although this is an interesting explanation for such error types, it is not the only explanation. It may be that errors such as these are a reflection of "natural" developmental stages which become prolonged or exaggerated within the context of certain types of instruction.

Other

As you probably discovered in your analysis of the errors presented in this module, it is not always possible to determine the source of a particular error. For example, when a French speaker learning English as a second language says I have lived here since 3 months, this error could be seen as an attempt by the learner to transfer the complex rules of expressing duration in French to English. However, because learners from a variety of first language backgrounds have also been found to produce such an error, it is difficult to argue that it is a case of a learner transferring rules from French to English. It may be a developmental error. Examples such as this show how difficult it is to know which category an error belongs to. In fact, it is likely that two or more processes might occur simultaneously and reinforce each other.

A final point to mention in our discussion of error analysis is that up to now we have been talking about learners' errors as being systematic and that the speech learners produce is a reflection of the rules they have internalized about the second language. This assumption does not always hold because learners also make errors which do not result from an underlying system of rules but from other influences such as immediate communication demands and performance factors. For example, we have all made errors when we need to get our meaning across quickly in a communicative situation. In such a context we would probably produce errors that are not typical of our usual performance due to time constraints and other factors. Indeed, we produce errors such as this in our first language — often referred to as slips of the tongue.

What can we conclude from this exercise on the categorization of learner errors? First, although some errors can be quite easily categorized as developmental or interference, others can not. Furthermore, even when it is possible to classify an error, the error is not necessarily a reflection of the learners' competence since he / she may produce that error in one context but not in another. Nonetheless, as difficult as the work of error analysis is , it can tell us a great deal about how the learner is "cracking the code" *of the language being learned.*

❑❑❑

Day	3	
Activity	5	*The Significance of Learners' Errors*
Objective	To consolidate the notion that errors play an important role in the language development process	
Time	30 minutes	
References	Participants' Workbook, page 100	
Resources	None required	

Procedure

1 Ask the participants to turn to page 101 of their workbook, *The Significance of Learners' Errors*. (see Workshop Leader's Manual page 139). Tell them that this is a summary of an article written by S. Pit Corder in 1967.

> *The article itself is quite an important one in the field, as it marks the starting point from which the study of learner language developed as an area of investigation. Previous to that time, errors were thought of as evidence of poor learning, but Corder points out the significance of learners' errors to the learners themselves, to teachers of second languages and to researchers in the area of second language acquisition.*

2 Ask the participants to preview the study questions (page 100 in Participants' workbook and page 138 in Workshop Leader's Manual) and to return to them after reading the text.

3 When the participants have had sufficient time to read the text and answer the questions, ask if they would like you to go over the answers. If so, go over the study questions - answer key, on page 100 of their workbook (see Workshop Leader's Manual page 138). If they don't feel the need to go over the answers with you, go on to the next activity.

Answer Key

Study Questions

Preview the following study questions before reading the text. Return to them after you have read the text carefully and answer in the space provided.

1. **What theory of language learning did error analysis give birth to ?**

   Interactionism; i.e., there are parallels to be drawn between first and second language learning.

2. **How do we know that learners don't simply imitate what they hear ?**

   Because they make errors — if they didn't, we'd assume they were just repeating — and these errors are evidence that they induce rules.

3. **What valuable information does a careful examination of learners' errors provide for the language teacher or curriculum developer ?**

   It reveals that many learner errors are systematic, and this systemacity has implications for syllabus design. Indeed, the teacher who knows how much the learner has learned and how far he / she has to go, can adapt the language teaching materials and methods to the learner's needs.

4. **What is the difference between non-systematic and systematic errors?**

   Non-systematic errors are the mistakes which even native speakers make when tired or distracted. Systematic errors are the ones the learner makes regularly and which reveal his / her underlying knowledge of the language to date.

5. **What is the significance of learners' errors?**

   1. They tell the teacher how much the learner knows.
   2. They provide the researcher with insights into the language acquisition process.
   3. They provide the learner with a device for language learning. He / she can test his / her hypotheses about the system of the language he is learning.

The Significance of Learners' Errors

Errors have traditionally been viewed as the unwanted but inevitable by-product of language learning. In the case of second language learning it was assumed that errors were the result of interference from the habits of the first language; in fact, contrastive analysis grew out this belief. Its aim was to produce an inventory of areas of difficulty for teachers to use in planning their syllabuses. In the field of methodology there were two schools of thought. Some saw errors as evidence of the inadequacy of the current teaching techniques; others thought an analysis would prove useful for the development of techniques for dealing with errors. Out of these two schools of thought came the audiolingual method.

Corder points out that the study of errors has shifted the emphasis away from teaching and onto learning and a consideration of the parallels between first and second language learning. While it is clear that there are differences, it is not entirely clear whether the processes are all that different. The study of errors has led to a questioning of the behaviorist hypothesis and has given birth to the new hypothesis that a human infant is born with an innate predisposition and internal mechanism which allows him or her to construct a grammar from the limited (but essential) language to which he or she is exposed. Corder asserts that if this mechanism is postulated for the first language, it can be assumed to be available for use in the learning of a second language. From this it may be hypothesized that the second language learner has at his or her disposal at least some of the same strategies available to the first language learner.

This does not imply that the course or sequence of learning is the same in both cases. What is significant, however, is that in both cases, errors provide the best evidence of what the learner's knowledge of the language is at any point in its development. We do not regard a child's errors as deviant but rather as evidence that in fact his or her language is developing. If a child's utterance is without error, all we can assume is that he or she has heard the same utterance before and has repeated it. If, on the other hand, he or she makes an error, which reduces the language to a simpler system this is evidence that he or she has a tendency to induce rules.

In the case of second language learning, the study of errors can have similarly interesting implications. Although we can have more knowledge and control of input in the second language classroom, this does not necessarily mean that all input is available for intake. Not all that is presented to a second language learner is available for "going in". The learner himself or herself controls the input, or more precisely, the intake. In other words, input may very well be filtered by his or her innate mechanism, and not by the syllabus itself. For this reason, a careful *examination of learner's errors provides valuable information for the language teacher or curriculum developer. The study of learners' errors may reveal a systematic regularity which could be thought of as a built-in syllabus. (Here it is necessary to distinguish between systematic and non-systematic errors. Non-systematic errors are like those both native and non-native speakers make when they are tired or distracted, and can be better thought of as mistakes. Systematic errors are errors which the learner makes regularly and which reveal his or her underlying knowledge of the language to date.)*

In sum, a learner's errors provide evidence of the system which he or she is currently using (i. e., the interlanguage). They are significant in three different ways. First, they tell the teacher how much the learner has learned and how far he or she has to go. Second, they provide the researcher with insights into the language acquisition process. Third, and probably most importantly, errors can be seen as a learning device available to the learner. He or she can test hypotheses about the system of the language he or she is learning.

Corder concludes that the more we know about learners' errors, the sooner and better we can adapt language teaching materials and methods to the learners' needs. We'll have more information about what he or she needs, how he or she ought to learn and when he or she ought to learn it.

* * *

Day	3
Activity	6 *Developmental Sequences*
Objective	To introduce orders of acquisition by focussing attention on the order in which wh-questions are acquired in natural first language acquisition
Time:	10-15 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook, page 103
Resources	None required

Procedure

1. Recap that one outcome of error analysis has been to shed light on the processes or strategies which learners utilize in L2.

2. State that the work in error analysis has also been responsible for new insights into the sequence of language development.

3. Ask the participants to turn to page 103 of their workbook , *Developmental Sequences*, and to order the list of wh-question words in what they would judge to be the most obvious order of first language acquisition, 1 being the earliest acquired and 6 the latest acquired. Question words are given in random order: Why, What, How, Where, Who, When.

4. Elicit the participants' responses and encourage them to explain why they ordered the questions as they did, and then tell them the "right" order:

Answer Key

Most researchers in first language acquisition have observed that wh-questions develop in the following manner: *what* and *where* are the earliest forms to appear and *when* and *how* are the latest forms to appear; who and *why* appear somewhere in between.

5. Tell the participants that research in language acquisition has led to the *discovery* that some structures are acquired in certain order, and that the next few activities will look at orders of acquisition and how the characteristics of the environment influence these orders.

Day	3	
Activity	7	*"Natural" First and Second Language Orders of Acquisition*
Objective	To become acquainted with the developmental stages of "natural" first and second learner language	
Time	75-90 minutes	
References	Participants' Workbook, page 104	
Resources	None required	

Procedure

1 Explain that researchers in language acquisition have discovered that languages are acquired in an ordered and somewhat predictable manner, and that this activity will acquaint them with the findings in first and "natural" second language orders of acquisition.

2 Ask the participants to organise themselves into groups of four, and to label two members of each group *a* and two members *b*.

3 Ask the participants to turn to Participants' Workbook, page 104, *Natural First and Second Language Orders of Acquisition* (Workshop Leader's Manual, page 142). Point out that the material has been divided into three sections, with three parts each:

Section I
Questions

a) First language
b) "Natural" second language
c) Exercise

Section II
Negatives

a) First language
b) "Natural" second language
c) Discussion

Section III
Morpheme Acquisition

a) First language
b) "Natural" second language
c) Discussion questions

Section I
Questions

4 Explain that the object of the activity is to examine the orders which have been found for the two groups of learners (first and "natural" second language learners) and to note the similarities and differences between the two orders. The *a* members of each group will be responsible for reading and presenting the findings on the orders found for questions in first language acquisition (a). The *b* members will read and prepare themselves to present the findings for "natural" second language orders (b), and upon hearing the findings for first language, will note and point out the similarities and differences between the two orders. Finally, together the members will do the exercise (c).

5 When the groups have finished the exercise for section 1, go over the answers with them.

Section II
Negatives

6 Repeat procedure 4. When the participants have had time to discuss the questions (c), elicit their comments, and go over the Answer Keys (page 144 of Workshop Leader's Manual and page 109 in their workbook)

Section III
Morpheme Acquisition

7 Repeat procedure 4. When participants have had time to discuss the questions (c), elicit their comments and announce that we'll look at the orders of acquisition for classroom learners and the answers to these questions in the next unit of this module.

8 Together go over the conclusions, page 113 of their workbook (Workshop Leader's Manual, page 147).

9 Explain that the texts used in this activity are actually a summary of a much more complete text on "natural" orders of acquisition in first and second language development.

*Alternative Procedure

1. Follow General Procedure.
2. Suggest that participants read the summary and/or the text at home.
3. Tell them that you will go over the answers with them on the following day if they wish you to do so.

Answer Key

Section I:
Learner # 1

1. Uh how many, how many uh children are there? (Answer key: This is probably a stage 3, but it may be one of those well-structured questions in stage 2 which a speaker produces when he is just starting to invert.)
2. Is the girl have um-, the-, hair long? (Answer key: This is typical of the beginning of stage 2, when the general-typical of the beginning of stage 2, when the general-purpose question word is preposed at the beginning of sentences.)
3. Um uh is there-, a girl on the bike or a boy? (Answer key: Like the first example, this could be a 2 or a 3.)
4. What color is the um the hair of the girl who is do um uh skate um uh artistic? (Answer Key: Again, a 2 or a 3. Notice that this speaker's question are all 2's or 3's, indicating that he or she has entered the intermediate stage of question development.)

Learner # 2

5. ... does the book is open or close? (Answer key: If you said an early stage 2, you're probably right.)
6. It's a girl? (Answer key: A clear stage 1.)
7. Does the girl it's uh beside the bicycle or on the bicycle? (Answer Key: Another early stage 2. Notice this speaker's preference for does as general purpose question word. Did you notice also that this speaker is hovering somewhere between stage 1 and stage 2?)

Learner # 3

8. How many people on the beside of the-, uh ice, beside the uh ice, is drink the coffee? (Answer key: This is probably a stage 2 because the learner is inverting but not yet inflecting for tense or number at the same time.)
9. Uh what color is her hair? (Answer key: Stage 2 or 3 in form but probably a memorized chunk frequently heard in class: What color is…)
10. Uh, you don't see a little girl with her Dad? (Answer Key: Stage 1.)
11. … it's a boy beside the bicycle-, or on the bicycle? (Answer Key: Another stage 1.)
12. The little gi the little girl is making an airplane? (Answer Key: Another stage 1. The learner is clearly at the initial stage of question development.)

Answer Key

Section IIc
In French, when a verb is conjugated (meaning in *tense* as in *je veux* or *il a*, the *ne* appears before the verb: *Je* ne *veux pas, Il* n'a *pas*.

In spoken French, however, the *ne* is rarely heard, and children may not know that it is a required form. Thus, for children at least, we may say that French places the negator (*pas*) after the conjugated verb: *Je veux pas.*

However, since *pas* comes before a non-conjugated verb (such as *mangé* in *Le bébé ne veut pas mangé sa soupe* or *reçu* in *Je n'ai pas reçu ta lettre* a young child may think of French as having its negative *before* the verb, or at least, *after the auxiliary*. Based on this assumption, then, a French child learning the English rule that the negator always comes *after* the auxiliary should have no problem, and in fact francophones don't have much trouble with *placement* of the negative element. Of course, in the very early stages, they go through that classic universal stage of simply putting *no* before whatever it is they want to negate. For example, if asked *Is that a ribbon?* a young learner might respond *No, no ribbon*, but in later stages when other learners are still having trouble with where to place the negator, generally-speaking, placement is not a big problem for francophones. But they *do* have trouble with the form. Like most other learners of English as a second language, they have trouble making *do* carry tense and number as well as negation, and end up using *don't* as an all-purpose negator: *He tries to make his horse go but his horse don't want.*

Answer Key

Section IIIc

When participants have had time to discuss the questions (c), elicit their comments and announce that we'll be looking at the orders of acquisition for classroom learners and the answers to these questions in the next unit of this module.

Conclusions: "Natural Orders" of Acquisition

Questions

With second language learners learning to form questions in "natural" settings, then, there appears to be a sequence of development which is typical of most learners, and the stages are similar in most respects to first language question development. There are also differences which seem to be due to influence of the mother-tongue as well as other individual factors. What is perhaps most striking however, is that even children whose first language has subject-auxiliary inversion for question, go through a phase of using the declarative word order in forming questions in their second language[1].

Negatives

This division of learners' development into stages suggests a neatness and regularity which may be misleading. In reality, the stages are not so separate and learners may use a number of different forms at one point in time, a *stage* being identified by the emergence or increasing frequency of a particular form rather than by the absence of an earlier one. Nevertheless, the research evidence does suggest that second language learners in *"natural"* settings go through similar stages as they acquire the negative and that, to a large extent, these stages are similar to those which are observed in first language learning.

Grammatical Morphemes

Although a review of all the *morpheme acquisition* studies suggests that the learner's first language has a more important influence on acquisition orders than some researchers have claimed, there are some very strong patterns of similarity which cannot be explained by transfer from the first language.

There are still some unanswered questions in the morpheme acquisition literature. Nonetheless, it does seem as if second language learners have a tendency to acquire a set of English morphemes in a certain order. Just how much variation in this order is due to mother-tongue influence, the situation in which the learner language is observed, and individual learner factors is something we will continue to discuss in this and the next unit in this module.

---

[1] Even though written and formal spoken French has subject-auxiliary inversion for questions, children and adults in informal speech tend to use the declarative construction *Tu viens avec nous? Pourquoi il a fait ça?* Thus when a French speaker learning English fails to use subject-auxiliary inversion, he may be transferring structures from his L1.

Day	3
Activity	6 ***The Characteristics of "Natural" and Classroom Settings***
Objective	To tap what the participants already know about the differences between «natural» and instructional learning environments
Time	20 minutes
Reference	Participants' Workbook, page 114
Resources	None required

Procedure

1 Point out that now that we know something about the orders of acquisition for "natural" learning environments we can turn to classroom environments and look at the characteristics of classroom settings. Specifically, we can ask ourselves what effect the characteristics of the classroom environment might have on the language acquisition process.

2 Ask participants to organise themselves into small groups and to brainstorm the differences between "natural" and instructional language learning environments. In other words, ask participants to describe the differences between the characteristics of natural and instructional settings, including both traditional instructional settings and more up-to-date methodologies. The form on page 114 of their workbook has been provided for this purpose. (See Workshop Leader's Manual page 148)

Anticipated responses:
- feedback on error
- discrete point presentation
- amount of time available
- ratio of native speakers to learners
- variety
- pressure to produce
- etc.

3 Elicit responses and complete the list if necessary, recording items on the board. Allow 5-10 minutes of discussion on implications of these differences.

Difference Between "Natural" and Instructional Language Learning Environments

NATURAL	INSTRUCTIONAL	
	Traditional	Modern

Day	3
Activity	9 ***Concluding Remarks***
Objective	To summarize the activities of the day and to assign take-home reading
Time	5 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook, page 115 Suggested take-home readings
Resources	None required

Procedure

1 Conclude the day by pointing out that it is clear that learner language is both a systematic and a necessary stage through which all language learners pass. The knowledge that errors are a necessary part of learning and that certain structures are acquired before other structures has led to an evolution in the development of teaching methodologies.

2 Tell them that in the next unit in this module we will be looking at the results of those methodologies in Quebec classrooms. In other words, we will be examining the language development of children and adolescents who studied their second language in the "old" audiolingual structure-based programs, as well as children who are currently receiving communicative language instruction, including those in experimental intensive ESL programs.

3 Point out that Lightbown's 1983 paper, *Core ESL in Québec: What results can we expect?* is reprinted on pages 190-192 of their workbook, and is suggested take-home reading.

4 Point out also that the text for the lecture in Activity 7, *"Natural" First and Second Language Orders of Acquisition*, has been reprinted for their information on pages 183-189 of their workbook.

LEARNER LANGUAGE AND INPUT IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

DAY 4

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* This indicates that an alternative procedure is provided.

Day 4 at a Glance

1 Brainstorm generates differences between "natural" and classroom environments and what effect these differences might have on classroom language development.

2 Discussion questions and reading on research in audiolingual classrooms shows that form-based instruction disrupts the "natural" order and does not lead to grammatical accuracy.

3 Analysis of learner transcripts from three different programs and reading lead to conclusion that type of instruction has great effect on fluency in the target language.

4 Comparison of lectures given to native and non-native speakers of English illustrate the input modifications native speakers make in their speech to second language learners.

5 Examination of classroom transcripts from two different programs illustrate the varieties and features of input available in second language classrooms.

6 Concluding remarks distinguish between input and interaction, creating a link between Day 4 and Day 5, Interaction in the second language classroom, and take-home reading is assigned.

Objectives of Day 4

- ***To become familiar with the characteristics of classroom learner language***
- ***To become familiar with the characteristics of input (language available) in the classroom***

At the end of the session, the participants will:

- be familiar with the differences between second language acquisition in the classroom and in a "natural" environment
- know about the research done in Québec classrooms over the past decade
- be familiar with the modification native speakers make in their speech when addressing second language learners
- know about the varieties and the features of input in the second language classroom
- be able to distinguish between input and interaction

List of References and Resources

- Chalk and chalkboard, or overhead projector and acetates; or large writing tablet and felt markers.
- Overhead Projector and Acetate for Activity 6

Recommended Reading for Participants

Lightbown, P.M. 1993. ESL: "Time to Teach". *SPEAQ OUT*, Vol. 14, no4. June 1993.

Krashen, S., Long, M. and Scarcella, R. (1979). "Age, rate and eventual attainment in second language acquisition", TESOL Quarterly, 13, 573-582.

Required Readings for Workshop Leader

Lightbown, P.M. 1993. ESL: "Time to Teach". *SPEAQ OUT* Vol. 14, no 4, June 1993.

Lightbown, P.M. 1983. Acquiring English L2 in Quebec Classrooms. In Felix, W. & H. Wode (eds.). 1983. *Language Development at the Crossroads*. Tubingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

Day	4	
Activity	1	***Is Classroom Second Language Acquisition Like "Natural" Second Language Acquisition?***
Objective	To reflect on the difference between "natural" and classroom environments and what effect these differences might have on classroom language development	
Time	20 minutes	
References	Participants' Workbook page 120	
Resources	None required	

Procedure

1 Reiterate that we now have some conception of how language develops in "natural" language learning environments: error seems to play an inevitable part in the development of learner language, and learner language develops in predictable sequences.

2 Ask the participants if they think that language which is acquired in language classrooms progresses in a similarly ordered fashion.

3 Ask them to think about the different types of language classrooms, e.g. structure-based and communicative, and how these might affect the sequences.

- What features of language classrooms would seem to affect language development one way or the other?

4 Elicit the participants' predictions and comments, allowing discussion.

Expect and reinforce the suggestion that we might expect classroom orders to be different from "natural" orders and that the following may contribute to the differences.

- *input which is structurally sequenced*
- *input which is more closely tuned to the learners' level*
- *error correction*
- *grammar instruction, manipulation and drill*

5 End activity by explaining that each of the subsequent activities will help them to understand the basic differences and similarities of L1 and L2.

Day	4	
Activity	2	*Acquisition or Learning in the Audiolingual Classroom?*
Objective	To explore whether form-based instruction affects acquisition orders	
Time	30-45 minutes	
References	Participants' Workbook, page 121	
Resources	None required	

Procedure

1 Ask the participants to organize themselves into groups of 3 or 4 and to predict the answers to the following question

- *To what extent does instruction affect acquisition orders?*
- *Can learners* ***acquire*** *in spite of their* ***learning****?*
- *When input is strictly controlled according to a form-based syllabus and when real communication rarely takes place, can the natural orders override the instructional sequence?*

2 Explain that this activity will answer these questions by reviewing the research which has been done in audiolingual classrooms in Quebec.

3 Ask the participants to turn to page 125 of their workbook for an explanation of how the research was conducted. Point out the list of morphemes that were investigated.

1.	progressive -ing	It is raining.
2.	copula -s	She's happy.
3.	auxiliary -s	The girl is holding three balloons.
4.	3rd person -s	She wants a cookie.
5.	plural -s	Two trees and three houses
6.	possessive -s	The boy's hat.

4 Bring the participants' attention to the picture cards on pages 123-124 of their workbook. Explain that the researcher had four picture cards in front of her/him so that the student could not see them. The student picked one from an identical set and was asked to describe it so that the researcher could guess which one was being described.

5 Encourage the participants to look at these pictures and think about what they might expect children to say while describing them. Specifically, what grammatical morphemes would a speaker be expected to use?

6 Explain that the learner's responses were recorded, transcribed and then analysed for accuracy in *obligatory contexts*.

☞ An obligatory context *is defined as a context in which a particular morpheme is required.*

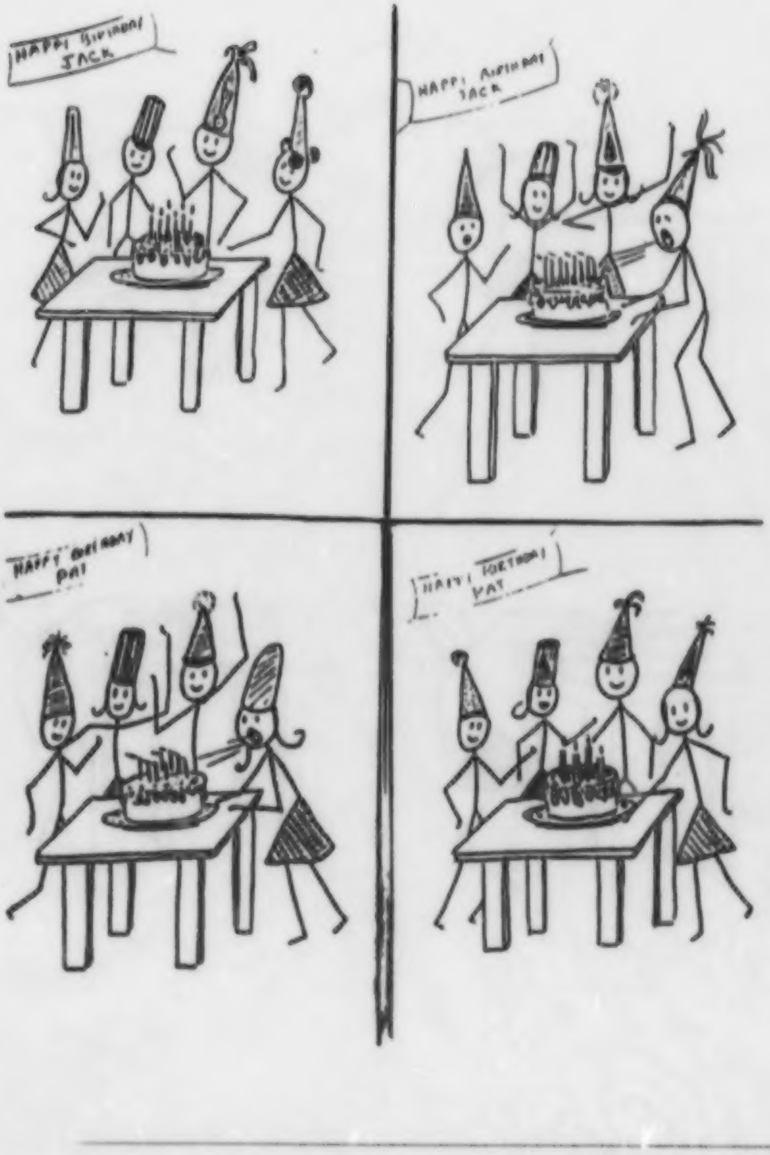
7 Ask the participants to silently read the summary on page 125 of their workbooks and to concentrate on discovering the answers to the above questions. When they have finished reading, encourage them to discuss and compare their answers.

*Alternative Procedure

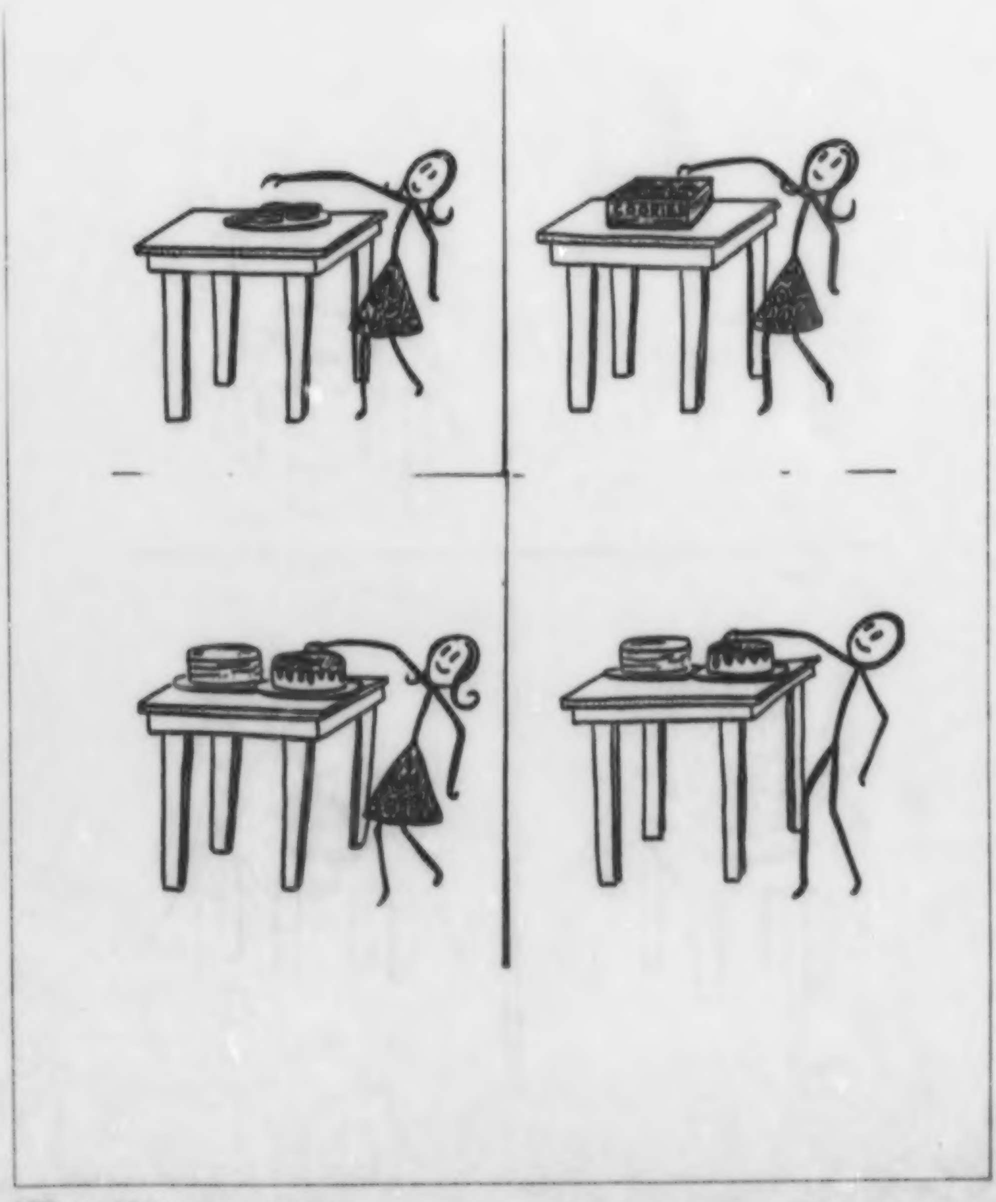
1-4 Follow general procedure.

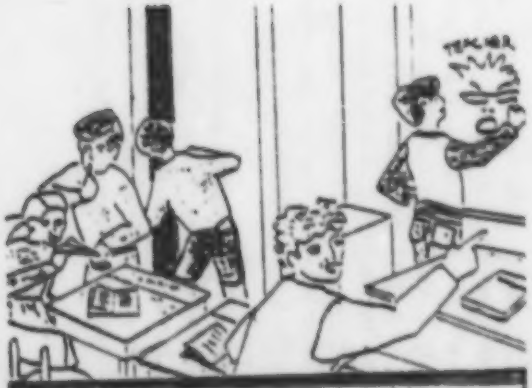
5 Ask participants to read the summary at home.

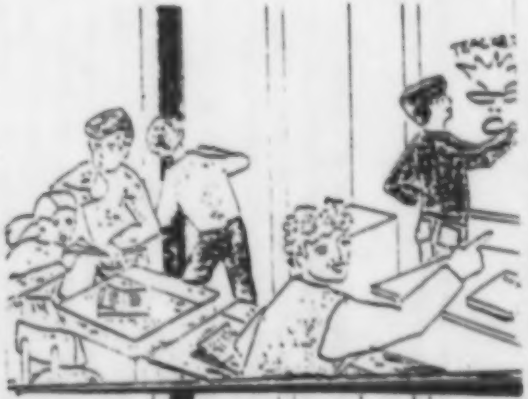
THE BIRTHDAY PARTY


HAPPY BIRTHDAY JACK
HAPPY BIRTHDAY JACK
HAPPY BIRTHDAY PAT
HAPPY BIRTHDAY PAT

THE CHILD WITH CAKE OR COOKIES




TEACHER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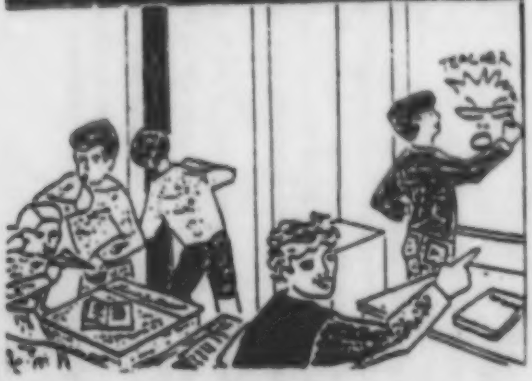
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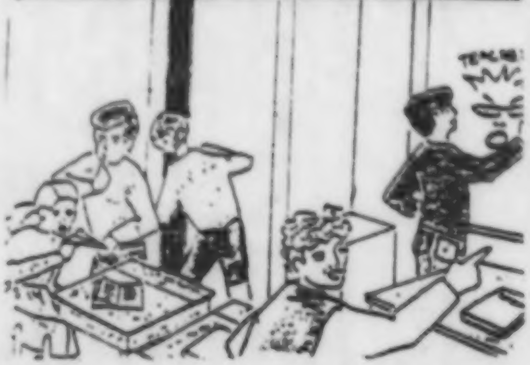
TEACHER

Summary of Classroom Acquisition Research

The following text is a summary of the results and conclusion of Lightbown's (1983)[1] paper based on a study of the development of English by grade 6 to grade 11 audiolingual classroom-instructed learners.

Lightbown set out to examine the following questions: To what extent does instruction affect acquisition orders. Can learners acquire *in spite of their* learning? *When input is strictly controlled according to a form-based syllabus and when real communication rarely takes place, can the "natural" orders override the instructional sequence?*

It was discovered that the development of L2 in classroom settings differs noticeably from the development of L2 in "natural" settings. Most noticeably, classroom learners use certain grammatical markers (specifically -s and -ing) correctly in the early stages of instruction and then drop them in favour of unmarked forms. This is not surprising given that one structure at a time is isolated, practised intensively and then dropped in favour of another structure. In contrast, natural second language learners seem to use mostly unmarked forms in the early stages and gradually add grammatical morphemes as they become aware of their functions in expressing meaning. Lightbown wonders if time spent in drilling students toward good habits *may be taking time away from activities which are more fruitful for language acquisition.*

The remarkable thing about the results is that, even though teachers conscientiously corrected errors in the grammatical morphemes studied, there was very little improvement over time. If anything, the learners' speech improved in fluency and vocabulary, but not in grammatical accuracy. Clearly, 20, 30 or 50 minutes a day of practising the same grammatical points, day after day, week after week, with learners who never use the language outside of the classroom, does not lead to the type of improvement hoped for. In fact, practising the same structures over and over again, with the use of a very limited vocabulary, must be very boring for the learners and can't do much for their motivation to learn the target language.

This study, while not supporting the "natural" order hypothesis, does not disconfirm it either. The differences may be due to the distorted version of the English language that students were exposed to. Perhaps the natural order would have prevailed if they had not been required to repeat and practice grammatical structures which were beyond what they would have been exposed to and what they would have included in their speech in natural circumstances.

---

[1] Lightbown, P. M. 1983. *Acquiring English L2 in Quebec classrooms*, Language Development at the Crossroads: Felix, W. & H. Wode (eds.). Tubingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

Finally, it is interesting that, although the students' responses were controlled to the extent that few errors occurred in classroom speech and learners were exposed to predominantly grammatically correct speech, the learners, when playing the Picture Card game and focussing on content as opposed to grammatical accuracy, tended to simplify and generalize just like learners who acquire their second language outside of the classroom. This means that language acquisition does take place in classroom settings. The same processes (unconscious structuring, organizing, hypothesis-testing) which lead to the acquisition of a fully developed linguistic system in natural L1 and L2 learners seem to operate in classroom settings even when the focus of the classroom instruction is on form rather than on meaning.

Lightbown asserts, however, that while this study shows that audiolingual instruction does not do what it sets out to do, on the bases of this study alone we cannot conclude that other approaches are better. What is needed is highly controlled and wide-scale studies that compare approaches ("communicative" to "notional-functional", for example). The problem here, of course, is that it is very difficult to define communicative and while teachers may claim to be using a communicative methodology, their techniques may vary widely.

❑❑❑

Day	4
Activity	3 ***Comparing the Approaches***
Objective	To become acquainted with the research which has been done with learners of ESL in three approaches which have been implemented in Quebec language teaching in recent years
Time	60-75 minutes
References	Participant's Workbook, page 127
Resources	None required

Procedure

1 Remind the participants that we know that form-based instruction does not lead to grammatical accuracy, but that we still do not know how the other approaches compare to form-based instruction. Explain that the following activity will acquaint them with the research which has been done within three methodological approaches implemented in Quebec ESL teaching in recent years.

2 Ask the participants to review and share what they know about the new MEQ communicatively-based program for teaching second languages, and what they know about the experimental intensive ESL classes currently underway in some Quebec school commissions.

For your information

In the early 1980's, the Québec Ministry of Education introduced a new communicatively-based program for the teaching of English as a second language at the primary and secondary level.This program focuses on the functional rather than grammatical use of language and provides more opportunities for learners to use language in meaningful and spontaneous ways.

Recently, a research project has been undertaken to investigate the second language development of francophone elementary school children who are enrolled in experimental intensive ESL programs in grade five or six. These programs provide students with English instruction for almost five hours a day, five days a week for five months of the school year. In the remaining five months of the academic year, students take their regular subject matter courses in French. This, as we know, is considerably different from regular

ESL programs which offer approximately 120 minutes a day of ESL instruction for the entire 10-month school year. The impetus for these intensive programs came from parents who were concerned that their children were not developing adequate proficiency in English in the regular so called drip-feed *programs.*

3 Tell the participants that before reading about the results of these studies, they will first have a look at transcripts of one learner playing the Picture Card Game from each of the three programs (audiolingual, regular communicative, and intensive communicative).

4 Ask the participants to look at the picture of *The birthday party* from the last activity and to examine the transcripts of the three learners, informally comparing the transcripts for:

1. volume of speech
2. plural accuracy
3. verb accuracy
4. fluency

5 Emphasize that the object is to understand the way in which learner language is analyzed within the research and not to actually do a detailed analysis.

For your information

The learners whose speech was selected for these activities are representative of what can be achieved in these programs. This is not to say, however, that these learners are typical of all learners in their respective programs. There is wide variation within each program, so while these learners are representative, they're not necessarily typical.

6 Ask the participants to work in the same groups formed for the last activity, examining the transcripts on pages 128-130 of their workbooks. Suggest that each member be responsible for one characteristic (e.g., 1. volume of speech) in all three learners' transcripts, and to report to the other members when all have had a chance to do their comparisons.

7 Elicit their responses to the data and ask them to read the summary *Comparing the Approaches* on page 131 of their workbooks.

*Alternative procedure

1-2 Follow general procedure

3 Ask the participants to read the summary on page 131 of their workbooks.

1. Audiolingual Learner*

This learner was in secondary III at the time of testing and had had approximately 450 hours of instruction since the beginning of grade 5 (2 hours per week in grades 5 and 6; 3-4 hours per week in secondary I, II and III).

The birthday party

# 1 Uh-, at the top of the picture-, it-, it write-, Happy Birthday Jack.

NS Mhm

# 1 And uh-, I see-, *four peoples*-, two girls and two boys

NS Mhm

# 1 In the centre-, a cake-, with uh-, one, two, three, four-, six candles.

NS Mhm

# 1 Uh-, a table,

NS Mhm, whose birthday is it?

# 1 Jack.

NS OK, this picture?

# 1 Yeah

NS Good. Thanks.

---

* Unpublished data provided by Patsy M. Lightbown. Subjects were students whose language was studied for Lightbown, P. M. 1983. Acquiring English L2 in Quebec classrooms. In Felix, S. & Wode, H. (eds.) 1983. *Language Development at the Crossroads.* Tubingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

3. Regular Communicative Learner*

This learner was in grade 5 at the time of testing and had approximately 2 hours per week of ESL since the beginning of grade 4 (approximately 100 to 140 hours of instruction).

The birthday party

2 It's table -, It's uh-, and on the table-, it's-, the-, comment on dit un gâteau?

NS Cake

2 Cake and and its' *Happy Birthday Pat*

NS OK

2 It's birthday Pat-, for Pat, Pat,

NS Right

2 and two girls and two boy boys

NS OK, is there anything else?

2 Um-, uh, he dancing and singing

NS Alright-, Do you know how many candles?

2 Eight

NS Eight. Could it be this one?

2 Yes

NS Good. Alright.

3. Experimental Intensive Learner*

This learner was in grade 6 at the time of testing, had had approximately 2 hours of ESL instruction per week since the beginning of grade 4, and then started the intensive program of 4-5 hours per day, 5 days a week in February and was tested in June (approximately 450 hours of instruction in all).

The birthday party

# 3	On my picture there are five students in the class. One is drawing a picture of the teacher.
NS	Mhm
# 3	And over - , it's a teacher, he write teacher. It's a boy. He has uh -, black hairs -, a red sweater, or sweatshirt with long sleeves and a pair of jeans ah ablue pants. He's at the front, drawing on the bil blackboard. At the door there is a -, girl or a boy. It seems like a girl. She's wearing a -, purple or lilac sweater or sweatshirt. He has blond hairs with uh bermudas, brown or orange.
NS	Mhm
# 3	Uh, she's-, getting?
NS	checking?
# 3	Checking for uh the teacher who come. Uh, there is another boy, uh in front of the -, teacher's desk. He's -, pointing the blackboard or the, the boy. He has red hairs.
NS	Mhm
# 3	Uh -, he wears a -, sleeve? uh long-sleeve -, yellow or uh white uh-, shirt with a sweater with no sleeves.
NS	Mhm
# 3	in wool? wool
NS	Wool
# 3	Wool. And uh it's green. Uh, on the desk there is a book.
NS	Mhm
# 3	the middle
NS	Mhm
# 3	Uh, the desks of the students are separate. They are orange or brown -mm with a chair. There is a book on each -, of the two desks we see.One of the desks have a book uh open. Uh - a boy who has brown hairs uh said uh shhht to a girl who make uh an airplane with paper.
NS	OK, Good. Is that it?
# 3	Yes.

Comparing the Approaches

The Three Learners

In terms of plural and verb accuracy, all three learners make errors and all three have a long way to go toward grammatical accuracy in language. However, although the intensive learner does not appear to be any more accurate than the other two, he produces a great deal more language, including more contexts for the use of the morphemes in question, than the learners from the other programs.

What truly distinguished these students most from each other was their fluency — the ease with which they spoke. The student from the intensive program produced more speech, his speech was more extended, he did not revert to French or ask the interviewer for help, he spoke with confidence and ease, with few hesitations, and organized his description in such a way as to make him quite fluent in English. His speech is quite representative of what learners in the intensive program can do.

The Three Programs

Unfortunately, no research has yet been done to examine the language development of learners from the regular communicative program. This is partially due to the fact that until 1989 there was no group of learners who had had all of their exposure to English under the new methodology and who had as many hours of exposure to ESL as a group of intensive ESL learners gets in one 5-month session. Now that there is a group that meets these specifications, the research will certainly be done and we will be able to compare learners from all three programs who have had the same number of hours of exposure to ESL in the classroom.

However, learners from the regular program have been used as controls in studies of the intensive programs, so we do have some information on their development and it is possible to compare the two groups to some extent.

Because the research on the language development of learners intensive programs is currently underway, the findings reported below are preliminary in nature, but they seem to confirm what our comparison of the three learners showed. In general, it seems that learners in these intensive programs are doing very well. In terms of their listening and reading comprehension skills, they improve considerably over the five months of intensive instruction. In fact, it has been found that the learners from the intensive programs performed better on one of the combined reading/listening comprehension measure than a group of secondary III learners who had received the same total hours of instruction but over a longer period of time. This was also true of their oral fluency skills. That is, compared with a group of secondary IV learners, intensive students appear much more at ease in using English, possess a wider range of communicative and strategic abilities, have greater vocabularies, produce more complex sentences and possess a much greater confidence when interacting with native speakers of English. However, in terms of their grammatical accuracy, intensive program learners still have much to learn. A comparison of their use of -s and -ing morphemes on the oral communication game revealed that their accuracy levels tend to be much lower than the accuracy levels of learners in the previous study of learners in audio-lingual based programs.

Because the intensive programs studied are highly communicative in nature with very little focus on grammar or correction, the question is raised as to whether this might be a factor contributing to these low levels of accuracy. This question will be investigated as the research continues. Nonetheless, the preliminary findings of this research are encouraging if one considers that the objective of these intensive programs is to develop in the learner fluency and confidence in using English in communicative situations.

Day	4	
Activity	4	***Input Modifications***
Objective	To explore the modifications which native speakers make in their speech to second language learners	
Time	20 minutes	
References	Participants' Workbook, page 133	
Resources	None required	

Procedure

1 Explain that now we're going to look at what learners are exposed to. In this activity we'll be reviewing what is known about the varieties and characteristics of classroom input.

2 Ask the participants if they make any modifications to their own speech in the classroom to make their input more accessible to the learners. Elicit responses and allow discussion.

> ☞ *These questions may help you lead the discussion:*
> *What modifications do they make ?*
> *What are the linguistic features of their simplifications (e. g., fewer contractions, simple sentence structure, repetitions, slower rate of delivery,)*
> *What functions do these modification serve?*
> *Are their simplifications ever non-standard?*

3 Ask the participants to turn to pages 134 and 135 in their workbooks (see Workshop Leader's Manual, pages 175 and 176).

> ☞ *Explain that the two excerpts are from transcripts of lectures given by the same speaker, a professor of psychology from the University of Ottawa, teaching the same content to a group of native speakers, and to a group of non-native speakers.*

4 Ask the participants to examine the excerpts briefly and to say which was given to native speakers and which was given to non-native speakers.

> *It is not necessary to read the excerpts carefully at this point. There should be no problem deciding that excerpt 2 was delivered to non-native speakers.*

5 Point out that the excerpts have been divided into three sections. The participants will be comparing section 1 in excerpt #1 with section 1 in excerpt #2, and section 2 with section 2, etc. The object of their comparison is to find evidence of modifications in excerpt 2, which is the lecture given to non-native speakers.

6 Count the participants aloud, 1-2-3, 1-2-3, 1-2-3, etc., until all of the participants have a number. Ask each to work on the section corresponding to his or her number, comparing, underlining and briefly describing modifications which seem to be made in the interest of simplifying the input.

7 Allow the participants the choice of working alone or pairing up with another participant assigned the same section.

8 Allow them to work as long as they seem animated and busy and then elicit their findings, one section at a time.

> **Answer Key**
>
> In general, excerpt 2 has shorter and less complex sentences, more paraphrasing (*in other words* ...), more illustration (e.g., *I'm going to give you a job ... I will give you sixty thousand dollars a year* ...), more repetition, etc.

*Alternative Procedure

1-4 Follow general procedure.

5 In plenary, go through the excerpts finding evidence of modifications in excerpt 2, stopping when the point has been made that excerpt 2 has shorter and less complex sentences, more paraphrasing, more illustration, more repetition, etc.

Excerpt 1

1. OK. Then, we come to another funny word, ah-, which has quite a specific meaning in the context of instrumental conditioning, and the word is shaping.

   Now, what is shaping ? Well, to understand that, we first should probably refresh ourselves on the idea of the rat in the, uh-, Skinner box which eventually presses a lever and then gets a food reinforcement and then learns to press the lever that way. OK ? the, the initial lever pressings were, if you like, random, just in the course of its exploratory activity, it happened to do that.

2. Now, let's put ourselves in a somewhat different situation. Let's assume that you have been hired by the Barnum & Bailey Circus, uh, because you have a good knowledge of principles of learning from psychology and uh, your task is to deal not so much with a rat in a Skinner box but uh, to deal with a lion in a circus act and uh,-

   Specifically, Barnum & Bailey, uh-, the management has thought that it would be interesting for audiences if this animal were to come to the centre ring, then uhmm, perform some kind of a bow or a curtsey, then proceed to a flagpole, take the uh, rope with its teeth and proceed to hoist up, uh, a flag, in the States, American, or in Canada, of course, the Canadian flag, but in any case, to hoist up a flag on the flagpole. OK ?

3. Now, you would become more stringent and you would require that before you reinforced, and as you can see, you would be in effect shaping the behavior of the animal to perform a behavioral sequence which was not part of its repertoire initially, by breaking it into little elements and adding one element at a time. That's the idea of shaping.

   Sure. Shaping is a conditioning technique which is really a variation of instrumental conditioning whereby you break up a complex behavior into a sequence of simple components and then condition the total sequence, one component at a time, using the principles of instrumental conditioning. OK. Alright, that's shaping.

Excerpt 2

1. OK. If it is, now I would like to go on to something quite different and ah, it is the idea of shaping.

   What is shaping ? Well, let me put it this way. If we go back to the idea of the Skinner box, and a rat in a Skinner box, the rat learns because, at first it will explore, it will go all over the Skinner box, and as it explores it will eventually hit that lever. It will press accidentally and it will get reinforcement, OK ?

   So the behavior, followed by a reinforcement, tends to occur again. So learning takes place, that's fine.

2. But -, ahm-, let us suppose that someone told you, I'm going to give you a job. And, ahm-, I will give you sixty thousand dollars a year. If you accept this job, and it is a job with a circus, so you are going to be employed by a circus — his employment with a circus.

   And, ah, what you have to do is teach my lions to dance, ug, some ballet routine, and to do something else, perhaps take a flag and put it up on a flagpole, OK ?, put the Canadian flag up on the flagpole.

   Once you have done that, you become more demanding.

3. In other words, what you find is that when it stands on its hind legs, sometimes it goes only this high, other times it goes higher just accidentally. So your second step is going to be, you reinforce only, you give meat only when the lion goes higher.

   In other words, you gradually give shape to the behavior you want. The principle is instrumental conditioning.

   A behavior that is followed by a reinforcement tends to repeat, but the practice is, you take the behavior one little bit at a time, and you build up a sequence of behaviors, so that eventually you demand the entire sequence in order to reinforce. And that is shaping.

Day	4
Activity	5 ***Classroom Input — Sources and Characteristics***
Objective	To tap the participants' knowledge of the varieties and features of input in the second language classroom
Time	45-60 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook, page 137
Resources	Acetate of *Input and Interaction Matrix*

Procedure

1 Ask participants what sources of input there are in the classroom.

☞ *Anticipated responses: teacher, written texts, other students, tapes, etc.*

2 Then ask them to think about the differences between the sources.

☞ *Anticipated responses:*
If one compares teacher talk to student talk, teachers probably ask more questions and make more corrections.
Students make more errors.
Texts are simplified and graded.

3 Put the acetate of the *Input and Interaction Matrix* on the overhead projector. Go through two of the *Sources of Input* with the group, indicating with words of frequency or probability (e.g., never, seldom, highly unlikely) how likely it would be for each source to be characterized by each of the *Characteristics of Input*.

See *Getting Acquainted with the Matrix*, pages 179 and 180 (Workshop Leader's Manual) for possible responses for the following sources:

1) Teacher presentation of language structure or vocabulary
6) Students working in groups on communicative activities

4 Once the participants are acquainted with the matrix, ask them to work in pairs to examine the classroom transcripts which start on page 139 of their workbooks, using the matrix to help them think about sources and characteristics of classroom input.

Encourage the participants to do the comparison as informally as possible and point out that the exercise is meant only to get them thinking about the variety of input sources and the functions they serve. Stress that the object of the exercise is not an accurate count of occurences of each characteristic or source of input, but rather, to think about the differences.

☞ *Not all sources of input nor all characteristics of input are contained in the transcripts. Likewise, not all sources and characteristics in the transcripts are represented on the matrix.*

5 Use the answer key, *Using the matrix for classroom transcripts,* (page 185) Workshop Leader's Manual) to go over their responses to the transcripts.

6 Wrap up this activity by emphasizing to the participants how strikingly different these transcripts from two classrooms are, even though the activities are both teacher-centered. In the transcript from class #1, the focus is form-based (i.e., grammar) and in class #2, it is meaning-based. There is a primary focus on correct grammar, display questions and feedback on error in the transcript from class #1. In the transcript from class #2, the primary focus is on meaning, conversational interaction and genuine questions although there are some references to grammatical accuracy when the teacher feels it is necessary.

7 Ask the participants what their opinions are regarding these differences in classroom interaction. Ask them also which sources of input they feel are the most beneficial in classrooms in Québec.

Getting Acquainted with the Matrix

To help the participants with this, point out to them that the characteristics of input in two of the sources from the matrix would probably be something like the following:

I. TEACHER PRESENTATION OF LANGUAGE STRUCTURE OR VOCABULARY

Charateristics

1. **Correct grammar**: most probably yes, since the teacher is the source of the input
2. **Some errors**: most probably not, unless the teacher has difficulty with the target language him/herself
3. **Feedback on error**: yes, probably, particularly if the teacher asks students to demonstrate their knowledge of the form
4. **Genuine questions**: probably none since the teacher is presenting language form and not likely to be asking students questions to which he/she doesn't have answers.
5. **Display questions**: probably yes, particularly if the teacher asks the students to demonstrate their understanding of the form/structure being taught by giving examples of the use of that form.
6. **Aids comprehension**: most likely yes, since the teacher's intention is to make this presentation as comprehensible as possible to the learners
7. **Contributes to fluency**: unlikely since the students are primarily involved in listening to the presentation of grammar and if called upon to speak, the focus would probably be on students demonstrating their knowledge of one particular feature of language in isolated phrases.
8. **Negotiation of meaning**: unlikely that this will occur when the teacher is presenting language structure unless students ask questions of clarification about the forms of language.

3. STUDENTS WORKING IN GROUPS ON COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES

Characteristics

1. **Correct grammar**: Students will be focusing on communication and getting their messages across. In the process, they will likely make errors. But some of their sentences should be correct.

2. **Some errors**: Yes, same as above

3. **Feedback on error**: This depends on different factors. If the teacher is present and chooses to correct errors as they occur in communication, then feedback on error may be provided. However, this feedback will probably be rare. Also, the teacher cannot be present in all groups at all times to provide feedback on error even if she/he wanted to. It is unlikely that students will correct each other's errors in communication practice, even if explicitly asked by the teacher to do so.

4. **Genuine questions**: Most probably yes, since in such activities learners are expected to exchange information, solve problems, etc.

5. **Display questions**: Not very likely unless the communication practice is highly controlled and restricted in such a way as to produce such questions. In this case, the activity would not be truly communicative.

6. **Aids comprehension**: Yes, probably, since students are providing each other with simplified input and focussing on getting their message across in such a way for their listeners to understand.

7. **Contribution to fluency**: Yes, since learners are in a situation where they must try to express their meanings and intentions in whatever way they can. It creates a context for learners to develop more confidence by realising that they can get their message across in the second language even if it's not grammatically perfect.

8. **Negotiation of meaning**: Yes, highly likely since students will be making an effort to understand and interpret each others' utterances in order to complete a task, solve a problem etc., in their groups.

Input and Interaction Matrix

Characteristics of Input / Sources of Input	1. Correct grammar	2. Rare errors	3. Feedback on error	4. Genuine¹ questions	5. Display² questions	6. Aids Comprehension	7. Contributes to fluency	8. Negotiation of meaning
1. Teacher's presentation of language structure or vocabulary								
2. Teacher giving instructions (a "management" function)								
3. Students involved in language "drill"								
4. Students working in groups on communicative activities								
5. Students reading from ESL materials								
6. Students reading from magazines or newspapers								
7. Listening to a dialogue from an ESL recording								
8. Listening to a radio program or watching a video								

¹ Genuine questions: speaker doesn't know the answer in advance

² Display questions: speaker knows answer but asks so that the listener will demonstrate his or her knowledge of language

#1 - Teacher/Student Interactions in Secondary IV Audiolingual Classroom

Teacher: *OK, we finished the book-, we finished in the book Unit 1, 2, 3. Finished workbook 1, 2, 3. So today we're going to start with Unit 4. Don't take your books yet, don't take your books. In 1, 2, 3 we worked in what tense? What tense did we work on? OK?*
Student: *Past*
Teacher: *In the past-, What auxiliary in the past?*
Student: *Did*
Teacher: *Did-*, (writes on board «1-2-3 Past)
Unit 4, unit 4, we're going to work in the present, present progressive, present continuous-, OK? You don't know what it is?
Student: *Yes*
Teacher: *Yes? What is it?*
Student: *Little bit*
Teacher: *A little bit*
Student: —
Teacher: *Eh?*
Student: *Uh, present continuous*
Teacher: *Present continuous? What's that?*
Student: *e-n-g*
Teacher: *i-n-g*
Student: *Yes*
Teacher: *What does that mean, present continuous? You don't know? OK, fine. What are you doing, Paul?*
Student: *Rien*
Teacher: *Nothing?*
Student: *Rien-, nothing*
Teacher: *You're not doing anything? You're doing something !*
Student: *Not doing anything*
Teacher: *You're doing something !*
Student. *Not doing anything»*
Teacher: *You're doing something-, Are, are you listening to me?*
Are you talking with Marc? What are you doing?
Student: *No, no-, uh-, listen-, uh-,*
Teacher: *Eh?*
Student: *to you*
Teacher: *You're you're listening to me*
Student: *Yes*
Teacher: *Oh-*, (writes What are you doing? I'm listening to you on the board)
Student: *Je-*
Teacher: *What are you-? You're excited.*
Student: *Yes*
Teacher: *You're playing with your eraser-*, (writes I'm playing with my eraser on the board)
Would you close the door please Bernard? Claude, what is he doing?
Student: *Close the door*
Teacher: *He is closing the door.* (writes «He's closing the door» on the board) *What are you doing, Mario.*
Student: *Moi, I listen to you*
Teacher: *You're listening to me*
Student: *Yes*
Teacher: *OK. Are you sleeping or are you listening to me?*
Student: *I don't -, moitié-moitié-, half and half.*
Teacher: *Half and half, half sleeping, half listening*

#2 - Teacher/Students interactions in a Grade 5 Intensive Communicative Classroom

Students tell class what bugs them. They have written «what bugs them» on a card or paper which they hold while speaking.

Teacher: *OK. Can I also have some volunteers —, come up and read what bugs you, some different (inaudible) here. Come up and leave-, read what bugs you. L…?*[1] *Close your desk.*

Student: When *I go to my friend on bicycle and the car, the car-, and the-, and doesn't put a flasher*

Teacher: *OK. What you're going to do: take it, and come up here and talk to the class. Cause you're talking to the board, and they'll not hear you.*

Student: *On my bicycle, and -, the car wanted to turn, and -, crash.*

Teacher: *Ah, yeah. That bugs me. Bugs me when you're driving in a car and you see a car coming and you wait and you wait for it to go, and then it turns so it doesn't even put on its flasher. Oh ! that's a good one! F…?*

Student: *It bugs me when a bee string me.*

Teacher: *Oh, when a bee stings me*

Student: *stings me*

Teacher: *Do you get stung often? Does that happen often? The bee stinging many times?»*

Student: *eah.*

Teacher: *Often?* (Teacher turns to students who aren't paying attention) *OK. S… and B…, you may begin working on a research project, hey?* (Teacher turns her attention back to What bugs me)

Student: *It bugs me* (inaudible) *and my sister put on my clothes.*

Teacher: *Ah! She -, borrows your clothes? When you're older, you may appreciate it because you can switch clothes, maybe. M…, this is yours , I will check. —, OK. It's good.*

Student: *It bugs me when I'm sick and my brother doesn't help me -, my -, my brother, cause he -, me -,*

Teacher: *OK. You know-, when (inaudible) sick, you're sick at home in bed and you say, oh, to your brother or your sister: Would you please get me a drink of water? — Ah ! Drop dead ! you know, Go play in the traffic! You know, it's not very nice. G…!*

Student: *It bug me to have -,*

Teacher: *It bugs me. It bugzs me*

Student: *It bugs me when my brother takes my bicycle. Every day.*

Teacher: *Everyday? Ah! Doesn't your bro* (inaudible) *his bicycle? Could his brother lend his bicycle? Uh, your brother doesn't have a bicycle?*

Student: *Yeah! A new bicycle* (inaudible) *bicycle.*

Teacher: *Ah, well. Talk to your mom and dad about it. May be negotiate a new bicycle for your brother.*

Student:(inaudible)

---

[1] Students and teacher are identified by a fictitious initial only, for example "L."

Teacher: *He has a new bicycle. But his brother needs a new one too.*
Student: *Yes!*
Teacher: *Hey, wo, just a minute! J...?*
Student: *M...'s brother has-,*
Teacher: *M...? Who has a new bicycle? You or your brother?*
Student: *My brother*
Teacher: *And you have an old one.*
Student: (inaudible)
Teacher: *And your brother takes your old one?*
Student: *clutch -, (inaudible) bicycle*
Teacher: *His bicycle! Ah! How old is your brother?*
Student: *March 23.*
Teacher: *His birthday?*
Student: *Yeah!*
Teacher: *And how old was he?*
Student: *Fourteen*
Teacher: *Fourteen. Well, why don't you tell your brother that when he takes your bike you will take his bike. And he may have more scratches than he figures for. OK? A ..., What bugs you?*
Student: *It bugs me when I ask my sister to help me with my bed, with my, with my bed, and she doesn't help.*
Teacher: *OK. You want her to help you make your bed?*
Student: *Yes.*
Teacher: *How old is your sister?*
Student: (inaudible(
Teacher: *Heh? A...?*
Student: *It bugs me when —,•*
Teacher: *Sounded good so far! And %... %*
Student: (inaudible)
Teacher: *Tat was really good A... Come here a sec and repeat that super loud, so that M... in the back can hear you.*
Student: *It bugs me*
Teacher: *Louder!*
Student: *It bugs me when some people don't listen to F... (the teacher). (inaudible) speak all the time.*
Teacher: *Ah! That really bugs me. You know what bugs her, bugs me. Must be true for at least ...*
(They applaud)
Teacher: (speaking to student who is rocking his chair) *The same conditions for you as for V... If you're not sitting correctly in your chair one more time, I'll take your chair away.*
Student: *OK.•*
Teacher: *OK? No more warnings. I'll take it, if there's another crazy group of -, four legs to the floor, cause it's finished. I'm gonna check it. OK! Any more volunteers for what bugs you?*

Answer Key

Using the Matrix for the Classroom Transcripts

Once the participants have read the transcripts of classroom interaction with the categories of the matrix in mind, point out the following characteristics to them, encouraging comparisons between the two which would probably look like the following in the matrix:

Transcript #1

A. **Source of input**:

1. Teacher Presentation of Language Structure or Vocabulary

B. **Charateristics of input:**

1. Correct grammar: yes
2. Some errors: not on part of the teacher
3. Feedback on error: yes, constantly
4. Genuine questions: yes, a few (interesting to note that they're almost always related to class management)
5. Display questions: yes, almost all of them
6. Aids comprehension: yes, probably
7. Contributes to fluency: no, practically no opportunities for learners to focus on getting their meanings across
8. Negotiation of meaning: no, learners have no need to paraphrase or request clarifications, and no opportunity to determine the direction of the discourse

Transcript #2

A. **Source of Input**

3. Students Presenting Information to the Whole Class with Teacher Directing (Note that this type of activity is not included on the matrix.)

B. **Characteristics**

1. Correct grammar: Yes, when the teacher provides it. No, not always, when the students speak.
2. Some errors: Yes, when students speak but not when teacher does.
3. Feedback on error: Yes, sometimes the teacher repeats what the student has said with the correct form (e. g., he bugzs me) pointing out the third person singular. However, this correction is not constant as the focus is primarily on letting students express their meanings.
4. Genuine questions: yes, almost all of them since the teacher and students are exchanging unknown information.
5. Display questions: no, none because of the focus on meaning not form/grammar.
6. Aids comprehension: yes, students get experience in listening to their classmates.
7. Contributes to fluency: yes, learners are involved in the practice of using their linguistic knowledge meaningfully.
8. Negotiation of meaning: yes, especially in the long exchange about who has a bicycle !

*Alternative Procedure

1-2 Follow general procedure

3 Ask the participants to read the transcripts on pages 139-141 pointing out that the first is from an audiolingual classroom and the second is from an intensive communicative classroom.

4 With the matrix acetate on the OHP, go over the Characteristics of Input indicating whether each of the characteristics is present in each of the classroom transcripts, finding instances of each characteristic to illustrate, and commenting on the differences.

5 Return to general procedure 6 & 7

Day	4
Activity	6 ***Summary: Input in the L2 Classroom***
Objective	To review the sources and features of input in the L2 classroom and to distinguish between input and interaction
Time	15 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook, page 151
Resources	None required

Procedure

1 State that in today's workshop we have seen that research in Québec classrooms shows that while type of instruction clearly makes a difference, there are many similarities between learners in different classrooms. Furthermore, the input which learners are exposed to in L2 classrooms is not only modified in the interest of clarity but also comes in various "shapes and sizes".

2 Distinguish between: **Input**, the linguistic forms which learners are exposed to, and **Interaction**, the functions served by those forms, such as expansion, repetition and clarification.

3 Point out that in the next unit of this module, *Interaction in the Second Language Classroom*, we will see, among other things, that:

- the most frequent objection to group work is that learners often provide imperfect models for each other, but that the advantages of group work far outweigh the disadvantages
- although reading and listening materials which have not been modified for second language purposes may often seem too difficult for learners, with interactive methodology the materials can be adapted quite nicely for the second language learner.

4 Announce that in the next and last unit of this module, everything that they have learned in the first four units will be brought together and applied to practice in the classroom. On Day 5, they will also be given ample opportunity to share their experience of the classroom with their fellow participants, to ask questions, and to explore the implications of second language acquisition research for the teaching of second languages.

5 Point out that an article entitled *Time to Teach* is reprinted in their workbook, pages 193-201 (pages 261-269 in Workshop Leader's Manual) and that it is strongly recommended that they read it. It was written by Dr. P. M. Lightbown, one of the authors of this module, and appeared in Quebec publication, *SPEAQ OUT*.

INPUT AND INTERACTION IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

DAY 5

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* This indicates that an alternative procedure is provided.

Day 5 at a Glance

1. Review of popular positions on the nature of language acquisition in classrooms focuses attention on the "form-based instruction versus meaning-based instruction" issue.

2. Re-tell activity reveals the results of the studies which have been done to examine the effects of form-based and meaning-based instruction on L2 learning.

3. Discussion and revision of some of the common sense assumptions traditionally associated with classroom language learning serves as review of all the major points covered in the 5-day module.

4. Follow-up reading is suggested and module is concluded.

Objectives of Day 5

- ***To illustrate that familiarity with research findings on individual differences, learner language, and modifications of input and interaction leads to a better understanding of the roles of teacher and learner in the second language acquisition process***

At the end of the session, the participants will:

- be familiar with some popular positions on the nature of language learning in the classroom
- be familiar with the studies which have been done to examine the effects of form-based and meaning-based instruction on second language learning
- evaluate some of the common assumptions made about classroom language learning

List of References and Resources

1. Chalk and chalkboard; or overhead projector and acetates; or large writing tablet and felt markers
2. Workshop Leader's Manual
3. Participants' Workbooks for Day 5

*4. Multiple copies of answer keys for Activities 2 and 3

5. Overhead projector and acetates for Activity 2; acetate pens (number depends on how many groups are formed for activity)

Required Readings for Workshop Leader

Lightbown, P.M. 1983. "Great Expectations: Second Language acquisition research and classroom teaching". *Applied Linguistics*, Vol.6, no.2, pp.173-189.

Familiarity with the studies summarized in Activity 2 is recommended.

Recommended Reading for Participants

Lightbown, P.M. 1987. ESL: *Research in Second Language Acquisition: What can teachers use?* Paper presented as the opening keynote address for TESL, Nova Scotia, Halifax, May 22, 1987.

*** The Workshop Leader is responsible for having the answer keys for activities 2 and 3, and the acetates of pages 154, 156,159, 161 and 163, participants' Workbook, made.**

Day	5
Activity	1 ***Positions on Language Learning in Classrooms***
Objective	To become acquainted with some popular positions on the nature of language learning in classrooms, and to examine one's own view on "grammatical" and "communicative" instruction in the second language classroom
Time	40-45 minutes
References	Participants' Workbook, page 148
Resources	None required

Procedure

1 Today, in this last unit of the module on language acquisition, we will be looking at what the studies have shown.

2 Reiterate that we now know much more about the nature of language learning in classrooms than we did ten years ago. Based on what is now known about individual differences, the effects of internal mechanisms and the environment, the role of error in interlanguage development, the orders of language acquisition, and the nature of input in the second language classroom, theorists have arrived at certain positions about how we can best structure the classroom to optimize learning. Naturally, the "experts" differ widely as to whether we should be focusing on form or not and there are convincing arguments either way. As a result, research studies have been designed to address the question: Do second language learners benefit more from form-based instruction or from meaning-based instruction ?

3 Ask the participants to turn to page 149 in their workbook, *Positions on Language Learning in Classrooms* (page 195 in Workshop Leader's Manual). Ask them to read the positions and, while reading, to ask themselves which position or combination of positions is most consistent with their own views of language learning.

4 After the reading is over, allow a few minutes of discussion and announce that in the next activity we will look at studies which have examined the issue of form-based versus meaning-based instruction in L2 classrooms.

Positions on Second Language Learning in Classrooms

1. Step-by-step

Cognitive psychologists have tended to see second language acquisition as the gradual building up of knowledge systems which can be called on automatically for speaking and understanding. At first, learners have to pay attention to any aspect of the language which they are trying to understand or produce. Gradually, through experience and practice, learners become able to use certain parts of their knowledge so quickly and automatically that they are not even aware that they are doing it. This frees them to concentrate or focus on other aspects of the language which, in turn, gradually become automatic.

This implies, however, that the gradual attainment of automaticity is a linear process, while, in fact, the development is marked by bursts of progress and periods of back-sliding, making it a much more bumpy road. Recently, cognitive psychologists have investigated this phenomenon and they call it "restructuring". This refers to the observations that not everything we use automatically can be explained in terms of gradually building up automaticity through practice. Sometimes, the system restructures or somehow "fits" new knowledge into an existing system, without extensive practice. When the system quickly accommodates new knowledge appropriately, the learner enjoys a sudden burst of progress. When it incorporates the wrong things and restructures what had been previously acquired, apparent back-sliding can occur.

2. What is teachable ?

Some second language acquisition researchers have proposed an explanation for why it has often seemed that some things can be taught successfully whereas other things, even after extensive or intensive teaching, seem to remain unacquired. They claim that their research shows evidence that some linguistic structures, for example basic word order of sentences (both simple and complex sentences), develop along a particular developmental path. Any attempt to teach a word order pattern that is a Stage 4 pattern to learners at Stage 1 will not work because learners have to pass through Stage 2 and get to Stage 3 before they are ready to acquire what is at Stage 4. These stages are determined by the learner's passage through various stages at which he or she is capable of processing, unconsciously analysing and organising larger and more complex sentences in the language.

On the other hand, they say, certain other aspects of language — vocabulary, certain grammatical morphemes — can be taught at any time. A learner's success will depend on motivation, intelligence, the quality of the instruction, etc.

These researchers emphasize the need for language teachers to know which aspects of language acquisition are developmental (and thus not learnable before certain points) and which are variational (and thus learnable at various points in learner language development).

3. Just listen

One of the most influential — and most controversial -- views of second language development is the one which states that second language learners need not drill and practise language in order to learn it. It is enough to hear and understand the target language. This position considers that second language acquisition and second language learning are entirely separate processes. According to this view, learners may either acquire (unconsciously internalize) the structures of the target language while concentrating on the meaning conveyed in the language they hear or they may learn (consciously focus on and study) target language rules in situations of formal instruction. Knowledge of language which second language speakers have learned can only be used, according to this view, when the speaker is given plenty of time to plan what he or she will say and when he or she is more concerned with form than with meaning. When the speaker's main concern is with exchanging meaningful messages, he or she will use the language system he or she has acquired. According to this view, speaking practice, error correction and formal teaching of grammar do not have any real effect on the processes of language acquisition. Language acquisition takes place simply through the learner's exposure to comprehensible input.

4. Get it right from the beginning

The position on language acquisition which was the background for audio lingual teaching (such as the Lado English Series) was that learners needed to build up their language knowledge gradually by practising only correct forms. Teachers avoided letting learners speak freely because this would lead them to make errors. The errors, it was said, would become habits. So it was better to prevent these bad habits before they happened.

Supporters of communicative language teaching have strongly argued that errors are a natural part of any learning process and that the motivation of learners is stifled by an insistence on always getting it right. They argue for the value of developing fluency before accuracy.

Recently, some researchers and educators have revived the concern that allowing learners too much freedom without correction and explicit instruction will lead to early fossilization of errors. Once again we hear the call for making sure learners get it right from the beginning.

5. Consciousness-raising

This position offers support for the idea that it is sometimes necessary to draw learners' attention to their errors and to focus on certain linguistic (vocabulary or grammar) points.

The difference between this position and the get it right from the beginning position is that this position acknowledges that it is appropriate for learners to engage in meaningful language use from the very beginning of their exposure to the second language and that much of language acquisition will develop naturally out of such language use.

The difference between this position and the just listen position is that it does not consider that comprehensible input and meaningful interaction will be enough to bring learners to high levels of accuracy as well as fluency. Researchers who take this position argue that learners need and can benefit from explicit focus on the language.

This position is very much like the teachability position except that those who take the consciousness-raising position emphasize the hypothesis that some aspects of language must be taught. For example, when an error learners make is due to transfer from their first language, and when all the learners in a group tend to make the same error, it will be virtually impossible for learners to recognize and correct this error on their own.

This position further differs from just listen in that it assumes that what learners learn when they are focusing on language itself can eventually lead to changes in their interlanguage system. The holders of this position do not argue that teaching particular language points will prevent learners from making errors or that learners will be able to begin using a form or structure with complete accuracy as soon as it is taught. Furthermore, they emphasize that they do not believe that the focused teaching must be done in a way which involves explicit explanations of the point or that learners need to be able to explain why something is right or wrong. Rather, they simply argue that the learner's attention must be drawn to the way in which his or her language differs from that of a more proficient speaker.

Teachers must look for the right moment to create increased awareness on the part of the learner — ideally, a time when the learner is motivated to say something and wants to say it as clearly and correctly as possible.

Day	5
Activity	2 ***Some Studies of Classroom Learning***
Objective	To become acquainted with the studies which have been done to examine the effects of form-based and meaning-based instruction on L2 learning
Time	90 minutes
Reference	Participants' Workbook, page 152
Resources	Answer key handouts Acetates for studies Overhead projector and acetate pens (one per group)

Procedure

☞ *N.B. In preparation for this activity, please make multiple copies (1 per participant) of the Answer Key (Workshop Leader's Manual, pages 211 to 213 and acetates of the worksheets for Study 1 to Study 5.*

1 Ask the participants to organize themselves into five groups. Number the groups from one to five...

☞ *Ideally, groups should not exceed 3-4 participants each. If numbers warrant, organize more groups rather than have large groups.*

2 Point out that on pages 153 to 162 of their manuals, there are brief summaries of five studies on the effects of form-based and meaning-based instruction. Each text provides a description of the study in terms of subjects, research questions, measurement instruments, etc., but does not give the actual results of the study.

3 Instruct each group to read the study corresponding to its group number (Group 1, Study 1, etc.) Explain that when all group members have had time to read the study, they will then come together to discuss the study and to predict what they think the results of the study were, the object being that each group will eventually present its study to the other groups, describing the study and predicting the results with support from what they now know about the nature of language learning in classrooms.

4 Distribute the acetate pens and the acetates to their respective groups (Study 1, Group, 1, etc.). Encourage the groups to use the acetates in their presentations of the studies.and thereby be in the position to comment when the other groups are presenting.

5 Tell them that at the end of the presentations, you will be distributing answer keys which report the actual results of these same studies.

6 Point out that if a group finishes work on its own study before other groups are ready for the presentations, they are free to, in fact encouraged to, read the other studies and thereby be in the position to comment when the other groups are presenting.

7 When the groups have had time to prepare their presentations, in plenary, have them present them one at a time, encouraging questions and discussion.

8 Distribute the answer keys and have each group prepare itself to present the results of its study to the other groups. Allow the groups to present their results, and discuss.

☞ *For the participants' information: All groups will receive copies of the answer keys to all studies. At this point, however, encourage them to limit their examination to the results of the study which they presented.*

Study #1

This study was carried out to investigate the effects of communicative language teaching on second language learning. Savignon compared the linguistic and communicative skills of three groups of college students enrolled in French language courses at a university in the United States. All three groups received the same number of hours of instruction in regular audio-lingual programs where the focus was on the practice and manipulation of grammatical forms. However, **Group One** (the communicative group), had an additional hour devoted to communicative tasks in an effort to encourage practice in using French in meaningful, creative and spontaneous ways; **Group Two** (cultural group) had an additional hour devoted to a variety of experiences which were designed to foster an awareness of the French language and culture through films, music and art (all presented in English); and **Group Three** (control group) had an additional hour in the language laboratory doing what they would normally do in the language lab using the audio-lingual program materials.

Tests to measure learners' linguistic and communicative abilities were administered before and after instruction to see if there were any significant differences between groups on these measures. The tests of "linguistic competence" included a variety of grammar tests, teachers' evaluations of speaking skill and course grades. The tests of "communicative competence" included measures of fluency and ability to understand and transmit information in a variety of tasks which included: 1) discussion with a native speaker of French, 2) an interview of a native speaker of French, 3) the reporting of facts about oneself or one's recent activities and 4) a description of ongoing activities.

Question:

- *Which of these three groups did better on tests of "linguistic competence?"*
- *Which did better on tests of "communicative competence"+ Why ?*

Study #2

This study was undertaken to investigate the effects of differences in instruction on the English language proficiency of adult learners enrolled in a six-week summer intensive course. All learners were receiving communicative instruction — that is, instruction which focused primarily on meaning-based practice and opportunities to use the L2 in creative and spontaneous ways. However, some teachers focused more on grammar than others. For example, the teacher in one of the classes (Class A) spent considerably more time teaching grammar than did the teachers in the other two classes (Classes B and C). In Class B, the students' attention was frequently drawn to specific linguistic features, but this was done while students were engaged in communicative activities, not as a separate lesson. In Class C, attention was rarely, if ever, drawn to specific linguistic features.

The subjects were given a number of proficiency tests before and after instruction. These tests included:

1) **a listening comprehension test**
2) **a reading comprehension test**
3) **an oral interview/interaction task**
4) **a multiple choice grammar test**
5) **a multiple-choice discourse** test consisting of a series of short passages of 1-5 sentences in length with one sentence missing. The subject's task was to find the appropriate completion from a list of three alternatives.
6) **a sociolinguistic task** consisting of a description of a number of different sociocultural contexts. The subject's task was to select from a list of three alternatives the most appropriate way to express a given idea in that particular context.

Question:

- *Did differences in instruction lead to differences in learners' improvement? What kinds of differences? Why?*

Study # 2

Groups / Proficiency Tests	More grammar	Some grammar	No grammar
1. Listening comprehension			
2. Reading comprehension			
3. Oral interview/interaction			
4. Multiple choice grammar			
5. Multiple choice discourse			
6. Sociolinguistic task			

Study #3

Both teachers and researchers have noticed that French-speaking learners of English often use *have* where they should use *be* in English. This includes structures such as "I have fourteen years" which appear to be based quite directly on transfer from French. Also included, however, are sentences such as the following, produced by students describing pictures in the picture card game we worked on in Day 4 of this module: "You have three boys who are playing hockey"or "We have a girl holding three balloons." Although these uses of *have* as an introducer or «presentative» are not incorrect, and native speakers of English might also use them, English speakers tend instead to use a *be* construction, usually "There is a girl ... ". Furthermore, francophone learners also produce sentences which are not acceptable to native speakers, such as "Have a boy wearing blue jeans" or "He has a desk with a book on it". Both the acceptable and unacceptable *have* introducers appear to be based on a sort of loose translation of the French introducer expression Il y a ...

Below are three descriptions — case studies — of francophone students' experience in learning and being taught the English introducer forms:

Group 1. These students were in audio-lingual classes. By the end of grade 6 they had had two or three years of carefully structured practice and drill including many hours of practice with *there is/ there are* constructions. Their textbook did not introduce the verb *have* at all during this time. When they played the Picture Card Game at the end of grade 6, they always introduced their pictures by saying, "There's a boy ..." or "It's a boy ... " and never used sentences with have.

When these students moved to secondary school, they began to use the Lado English Series which introduced the verb *have* for the first time, and also provided further practice with *there is/there are*.

Question:

- *Do you think there were any changes in their use of* there is / there are? *Why?*

Group 2. These students were in intensive ESL classes taught by teachers who favored a «communicative approach» to language teaching and learning. Students heard a variety of English correct and fluent speech from their teacher, speech from classmates which included both correct and incorrect sentences. They had no special practice or explanation on *be/have* contrasts in general or on *there is/there are* in particular.

Question:

- *How do you think these students' use of introducer forms developed? Why?*

Group 3. These students were in an intensive ESL class taught by a teacher who noticed and became very sensitive to the students' use of *have* in introducer phrases. She launched a campaign to correct this non-native use of *have* and to get students to use *there is/there are*. She frequently corrected them and often made a joke of pretending to understand "You have a boy ..." to mean she was actually holding a boy in her hands, and she pretended to search for "the boy" when students produced one of these sentences. Eventually students corrected each other on this point.

Question:

- *How do you think these students used* be *and* have *constructions when playing the Picture Card Game? Why?*

Study # 3

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Type A Instruction			
Development of introducer forms?			

Study #4

In this study, differences in the quantity and quality of student language in group work versus teacher-centered activities were investigated. The students were Mexican adults learning English as a foreign language in Mexico City. Over a two-week period audio recordings were made of four classes in which students and teachers discussed the similarities between humans and other animals in both group and teacher-centered activities. The group activity consisted of pairs of students and the teacher-centered activity involved the teacher at the front of the class leading the discussion with approximately 15 students seated in front of her.

Different coding schemes were used to analyze the language which the students produced under both conditions. The first scheme included categories to measure 1) the number of reactions and responses in both types of activities; 2) the number of opportunities to speak; and 3) the number of attempts made to encourage each other to speak (e. g. asking questions, giving commands, etc.). A second coding scheme measured the total amount of student talk in both activity types and the extent to which a student's participation was controlled by the teacher or another student. A third coding scheme measured more qualitative features of learner language. This included a wide range of functional, social and rhetorical skills such as whether students initiated discussions, moved conversations on to a new topic, asked for clarification, contradicted, interrupted, encouraged, confirmed, negated, or elaborated on each other's utterances.

Question:

- ***Was the language of learners quantitatively or qualitatively different in group work versus teacher-centered activities? How?***

Study # 4

	Group Coding schemes	Group work	Teacher-centered
QUANTITATIVE	1 # reactions and responses # opportunities to speak # attempts to encourage each other		
	2 Total amount of student talk extent to which student's participation controlled by teacher or other student		
QUALITATIVE	3 Whether students: initiated discussions switched topics asked for clarification contradicted interrupted		

Study #5

In this study, the investigator examined the language produced by adult learners in task-centered discussions done in pairs. There were 18 subjects in the study — 12 non-native speakers of English whose native language was Spanish and 6 native English speakers. The non-native speakers of English represented two proficiency levels: intermediate and advanced.

Each subject was asked to participate in separate discussions with a speaker from each of the three levels. For example, an intermediate-level speaker had a conversation with another intermediate-level speaker, a conversation with an advanced-level speaker, and a conversation with a native speaker of English. The investigator wanted to compare the speech of native and non-native speakers in conversations as well as to compare differences across proficiency levels in these conversation pairs.

Question:

- *What kinds of differences would you expect from the language produced within the different pairs? Do you think learners talked more with other learners than they did with native speakers? Did learners produce more talk with advanced-level than with intermediate partners? Did learners make more errors and false starts with native speakers or with other learners?*

Study # 5

	Native	Intermediate Non-Native	Advanced Non-Native
Native			
Intermediate Non-Native			
Advanced Non-native			

Answer Key, Study 1
The results revealed no significant differences between groups on the linguistic measures. However Group One (the communicative group) scored significantly higher than the other two groups on the four communicative tests developed for the study. Savignon interprets these results as support for the argument that L2 programs which focus only on accuracy and form do not provide students with the necessary communicative skills in a second language.

It is important to note that Savignon's study leaves us with some important questions such as: Do students who receive primarily communicative instruction perform as well on tests of linguistic or grammatical ability as learners who receive primarily grammatical instruction? Savignon's study cannot answer this question because all her subjects received primarily grammatical instruction. Some of the other studies described below help to provide an answer to this question.

Answer Key, Study 2
The results of this study revealed that learners in Class A (the ones who received more grammar instruction) performed slightly better on the grammar test than learners in Classes B and C (the ones who received less grammatical instruction). However, these differences were not significant. Furthermore, the results revealed that learners in Class A improved on some of the other measures (i. e., the listening, speaking and discourse task). It was particularly interesting to note that learners in Class B performed best on the speaking interview/interaction task. In this class, students were often encouraged to pay attention to the formal aspects of their speech while they were engaged in communicative practice. The author concluded that instruction which focusses primarily on meaning (i. e., communication-based) but allows for a focus on grammar within meaningful contexts works best.

Answer Key, Study 3
Group 1. As soon as students learned the verb *have* they began to use it in introducer constructions. Eventually it came to dominate *be* constructions. The long period of practice with *there is/there are* before they learned *have* did not prevent them from making the transfer from French. It is probably significant to point out that all their practice with *there is/there are* had been in formal pattern practice (structural drills) -- not in contexts where they had something they wanted to say. In the Picture Card Game, students were free to create their own sentences, and — as soon as they learned it — they found it more «natural» to use have. It seems that the hours of formal practice of *there is/there are* did not change that.

Group 2. Students in this group started quite early to use *have* in introducer constructions. Only a few of the best learners — those whose English proficiency developed at a considerably more rapid pace than that of their classmates — used *there is* regularly at the end of their five months of intensive English. Their use of this form was just like that of students in the regular "communicative" programs who had much less instruction time in English. Many students also used it's, as in *It's a girl wearing a red sweater*. This construction may also be a transfer from French (*C'est une fille*), but it is acceptable to native speakers and used by native speakers in the same context.

Group 3. At the end of five months, almost all students in this group used *there is* at least some of the time. Like the students in group 2, many also used *it's*, but very few preferred to use *have* as an introducer in their natural speech. This was true for students at all proficiency levels, for the fast learners and those who were not so fast.

Summary: Examples or case studies can't "prove anything". However, these results , taken together with other research, suggest that two conclusions are at least reasonable:

1. When an error is common to a group of learners who have the same first language, it may be necessary to call the error to their attention in a very direct way. Otherwise, there is a tendency for them to "hear" the shared construction as correct. In fact, even teachers sometimes begin to think something "sounds right" when all the students in the class are saying it!

2. Learners will learn and retain explicit linguistic information best when it is pointed out to them at a time when they actually need it to say what they want to say.

Answer Key, Study 4

The results indicated that learner language in group work activities was both quantitatively and qualitatively different than in teacher-centered activities. The fact that learners produced more language in group work is primarily a function of more opportunities to speak in a group. However, the learners also produced a greater variety of speech as well. For example, in teacher-centered activities, the students responded to teachers' questions almost all of the time and rarely initiated speech on their own. By contrast, learner language in group work activity was filled with both questions and responses on the part of students with many more self-initiations. As well, learner language in group work contained a much greater variety of language functions than in teacher-centered activities. For example, group work talk had significantly more instances of students disagreeing, hypothesizing, predicting, exemplifying, clarifying, requesting, generalizing, defining, etc.

The authors concluded that group work activity not only provides significantly more opportunities for learners to speak than teacher-fronted activities, but more important, that the type of language students are able to produce and practise in group work is considerably more varied than in teacher-centered activities.

Answer Key, Study 5
Learners talked more with other learners than they did with native speakers. Also, learners produced more talk with advanced-level than with intermediate partners, partly because the conversations with advanced learners lasted longer.

Porter examined the number of grammatical and vocabulary errors and false starts and found that learner speech showed no differences across these contexts. That is, intermediate-level learners did not produce any more errors with another intermediate-level speaker than they did with an advanced or native-speaker. This is a particularly interesting finding since it contradicts the popular belief that learners are more accurate and careful when they are speaking with native speakers than with non-native speakers.

Overall, Porter concluded that although learners cannot provide each other with the accurate grammatical input that native speakers can, learners can offer each other genuine communicative practice.

Day	5	
Activity	3	***Beyond "Common Sense" in Classroom Language Learning***
Objective	To examine some of the "common sense" assumptions traditionally associated with classroom language learning and to re-think them in the light of what is now known about language learning and classroom interaction	
Time	60-75 minutes	
Reference	Participants' Workbook, page 164	
Resources	Answer key handouts: Re-written versions	

Procedure

☞ In preparation for this activity, please make multiple copies (1 per participant) of the answer key: *Rewritten versions* (Workshop Leader's Manual, pages 218 to 227) .

1 Ask the participants to organize themselves into groups of no more than four participants each. Number the groups 1-5.

2 Explain that the activity involves examining some of the "common sense" assumptions traditionally associated with classroom language learning, examining their validity and re-phrasing them to reflect the participants' greater understanding of the language learning process.

3 The assumptions are divided into five sections, each roughly reflecting the contents of one of the five days in the module. Each group is to work on at least two sections, the object being that each section be examined by at least two groups.

- **For example**:
  Group 1: Sections 1 and 3
  Group 2: Sections 2 and 4
  Group 3: Sections 3 and 5
  Group 4: Sections 2 and 4
  Group 5: Sections 1 and 5

☞ *Depending on the number of groups, juggle the sections, the only necessary condition being that each section be examined by at least two groups.*

3 Point out that although there is an element of truth in each of the assumptions, they are superficial and largely uninformed statements which do not take into account all of the factors which are at play, or all of the information at our disposal.

4 Explain that their task is to examine the assumptions carefully and to re-phrase or modify them to reflect what they know about language teaching and learning from their own experience in the classroom, and from what they have learned about the nature of language learning from the units in this module.

5 As a group they should prepare their re-written version for presentation to the group as a whole, being prepared to support their position with information from the module. They should divide up the presentation amongst the team members as they see fit. Finally they should act as group leaders in presenting their position, drawing out contributions from the other participants, encouraging discussion and encouraging everyone concerned to draw upon his or her own experience in the classroom.

6 At this point, bring their attention to the example on page 165 in their workbook (page 215 in Workshop Leader's Manual). Point out that this assumption has been re-written and expanded and that this is an illustration of what they are expected to do.

☞ *You may stress that it is not necessary to quote exact sources or units in the module as evidence. It is sufficient to explain their positions in their own words.*

Example

"Common sense" assumption:
Students will learn what they are taught.

Re-written version:
Second language learners will learn the language they are exposed to. However, the fact that something can be taught does not mean it can be learned at any stage in a learner's development. There are sequences of acquisition which will develop as the learner becomes ready. Furthermore, there are some things which learners eventually come to know or understand without having been taught them.

7 About five or ten minutes before you are ready to call for the presentations, ask the groups to consolidate their discussions into a rewritten version of their "common sense" statements. These can be compared to those of other groups and to the version which you will eventually given them.

8 Call on each group to present one assumption. Encourage the other group that worked on the given assumption to participate as much as possible.

☞ *Each group will only present one section (Group 1, Section 1; Group 2, Section 2; etc.) but each group will have given serious consideration to one other section such that when Group 3 presents Section 3, for example, Group 1 will be able to contribute to the discussion, challenging, supporting, etc. The best way to ensure that this works is to avoid telling the groups which of the two sections they will be asked to present until you actually call on them to do so.*

9 When all of the assumptions have been re-written, presented and discussed, hand out the re-written versions. Give groups five minutes to read the re-written assumptions, then invite comments and discussion.

"Common Sense" Assumptions

1. Assumptions that relate to *Individual Differences*:

   a. The earlier a second language is introduced in the schools, the better.
   b. People with high I.Q.s are better language learners

2. Assumptions that relate to *Theories of Language Learning*:

   a. Learners learn language mainly by imitation.

   b. Language acquisition is a linear process, with learners practising certain grammatical forms until they gradually get them right.

3. Assumptions that relate to *Errors and Orders of Acquisition*:

   a. Curriculum designers should organize the content from simple to complex, one structure at a time.

   b. Teachers should correct errors as quickly and as frequently as possible so that the learners won't form bad habits.

4. Assumptions that relate to *Learner Language and Input*:

   a. The main cause of mistakes in learner language is native language interference.

   b. Teachers should only use materials that include structures that the learners have already mastered; in other words, the materials should contain little or nothing that is new.

5. Assumptions that relate to *Input and Interaction*:

   a. In communicative language teaching, teachers should never correct student errors.

   b. Allowing learners to talk freely in group work exposes them to poor input which eventually leads to fossilization of errors.

Answer Key 1a

The earlier a second language is introduced in the schools, the better.

Re-written Version

When the objective of second language learning is complete mastery of the target language, it is desirable for the learner to be completely surrounded by the language as early as possible.[1]

When the objective is communicative ability for all students in a school setting, and when there is a strong commitment to maintaining and developing the child's native language, it is more efficient to begin second language teaching later. In research on school learners receiving a few hours of instruction per week, learners who start later (for example, grade 4, 5 or 6) catch up very quickly with those who began earlier.

[1] In the case of children from minority language backgrounds or homes where language, literacy and education are not well-developed, this may entail the loss or incomplete development of the child's mother tongue. Along the way, this may also lead to academic and personal problems. For these children, programs permitting the continued use and development of their mother tongue at home and at school can help to prevent some of these problems.

Answer Key 1 b

People with high I.Q.s are better language learners.

Re-written version

In classroom settings where the emphasis is on learning *about* the language (grammar rules, vocabulary lists, memorization) learners with superior intelligence tend to do well — as they do in other academic subjects.

However, in classrooms where language acquisition through interactive language use is emphasized, research has shown that learners with a wide variety of intellectual abilities can be successful learners.

Answer Key 2a

Children learn language mainly by imitation.

Re-written Version

It is difficult to support the argument that children learn language *mainly* through imitation when one thinks of the countless examples of novel utterances that children produce, such as “I'm hiccing up and I can't stop» and «It was upside down but I turned it upside right”. These examples provide evidence that children are creating their own system of rules through the development of hypotheses about how language works.

However, this doesn't mean that children do not learn through imitation. Indeed, some children imitate a great deal. Yet their language does not develop faster or better than that of children who rarely imitate. Furthermore, as we saw in some of the data samples of child language in Day 2, children do not imitate everything they hear, but often selectively imitate certain words or structures which they are in the process of learning.

Answer Key 2b

Language acquisition is a linear process, with learners practscing certain grammatical forms until they gradually get them right.

Re-written Version

Language learning is not linear in its development. Learners may use a particular form accurately at stage X in their development (suggesting that they learned that form), fail to produce that form correctly at stage Y and produce it accurately again at stage Z. This usually happens when the learner is incorporating new information about the language into his own internal system of rules. An example of this would be when a learner who has learned the past participle "went" as a memorized «chunk» learns to use the regular "ed" inflection for past tense marking. At this point, he/she stops using "went" and produces "goed". Once the learner becomes aware of the exceptions to the "ed" past tense rule, he/she begins to use "went" correctly again. This reflects the fact that language development is not just *adding* rule after rule, but integrating new rules into the existing *system* of rules, re-adjusting and restructuring until all the pieces fit.

Answer Key 3a

Curriculum designers should organize the content from simple to complex, one structure at a time.

Re-written Version

Researchers have shown that, no matter how the language is presented to learners, certain structures are acquired before others. This suggests that it is neither necessary nor desirable to restrict learners' exposure to certain linguistic structures which are perceived by a linguist as being "simple".

On the other hand, there is ample evidence to show that when native speakers or fluent bilinguals address learners, they quite naturally adapt the difficulty of their language as well as the interactive behaviors in order to help ensure that the learners understand them. *This* kind of simplified input and interaction contains a wide variety of linguistic structures, but — with beginning learners — will tend to leave out certain rare and/or complex forms. Teachers, like parents, intuitively increase the complexity of their language as the learners' proficiency increases.

Answer Key 3b

Teachers should correct errors as quickly and as frequently as possible so that the learners won't form bad habits.

Re-written Version

Errors are a natural part of language learning. This is true of the development of a child's mother tongue as well as of second language learning by children and adults. The errors reveal the patterns of learners' developing interlanguage systems — showing where they have overgeneralized a second language rule or they have inappropriately transferred a first language rule to the second language.

When errors are persistent, especially when they are shared by almost all students in a class, it is useful to bring the problem to the learners' attention. This does not mean learners should be expected to immediately or consistently adopt the correct form or structure. If the error is based on a developmental pattern, the correction can only be used when the learner is ready for it. It may thus require many repetitions.

Excessive error correction can have a strong negative effect on motivation. On the other hand, teachers have a responsibility to help learners do their best, and this sometimes means drawing their attention to persistent errors or to errors for which communicative language interaction does not provide "natural" sources of correction.

Answer Key 4a

The main cause of mistakes in learner language is native language interference.

Re-written Version

There are many causes for errors in learners' language. The transfer of patterns from the native language is one cause. More significant is the overgeneralization of the target language rules. Learners from many languages make the same errors when learning a particular second language.

One thing which is very clear is that second language learning is not simply a process of putting second language words into first language sentences. Furthermore, aspects of the second language which are different from the first language will not necessarily be acquired later or with more difficulty that those which are similar.

On the other hand, when errors are caused by the overextension of some partial similarity between L1 and L2, the errors may be especially hard to overcome — especially if learners are frequently in contact with other learners who make the same errors.

Answer Key 4b

Teachers should only use materials that include structures that the learners have already mastered; in other words, the materials should contain little or nothing that is new.

Re-written Version

Such a procedure can provide comprehensible input, of course, but — given a meaningful context — learners can comprehend the general meaning of many forms and structures which they certainly have not «mastered» and, indeed, may never have produced. Thus, restricting classroom second language materials to those which contain little or nothing which is new may have several negative consequences:

(1) There will soon be a loss of motivation if students are not challenged.
(2) Students need to learn to deal with "real" or "authentic" material. They do this at first with the teacher's guidance, then independently. Restricting them to step-by-step exposure to the language extends their dependency.
(3) Learners who successfully acquire English outside classrooms certainly are exposed to a variety of forms and structures which they have not mastered.

When a particular point is introduced for the first time or when the teacher feels there is a need for correction of a persistent problem, it is appropriate to use narrow-focus materials which isolate one element in a context where other things seem easy. But it would be a disservice to students to use such materials exclusively or even predominantly.

Answer Key 5a

In communicative language teaching, teachers should never correct students' errors.

Re-written Version

Communicative language teaching means different things to different people. Some people believe that learners should be free to use language in meaningful and creative ways and if teachers provide them with enough comprehensible input, accuracy will develop on its own over time. There is no guarantee that this will happen however. For example, we know that French immersion programs are highly communicative in nature with little emphasis on form and error correction. However, as we learned in Day #2, although children from these programs possess high fluency skills in the L2, they are still inaccurate in several aspects of grammar and syntax after many years of communicative instruction. Preliminary investigations of the ESL abilities of children in communicative intensive programs in Quebec (discussed in Day #4) have produced similar results.

Another viewpoint on communicative language teaching is that while the main focus of instruction should be on meaningful and functional practice, grammar and accuracy should be dealt with within the context of communicative language use. Some of the studies you read in the previous activity provide support for this position. Indeed they have found that both form and meaning-based practice seem to be essential in the development of grammatical and communicative skills. Therefore, there doesn't seem to be any evidence for the argument that teachers should never correct students errors. The original advocates of communicative language teaching did not argue for this either. As you know, they were trying to get away from a language teaching syllabus based on the teaching of one structure/grammar rule at a time and a methodology based on constant correction and feedback on error typical of audiolingual and grammar/translation teaching. They did not claim that grammar and accuracy were not important. Rather, they argued that grammar and accuracy need to be dealt with in a different way — within the context of communicative practice. But somewhere along the way, the words accuracy and grammar became "taboo" in language teaching leading to such false assumptions as 5a.

Answer Key 5 b

Allowing learners to talk freely in group work exposes them to poor input which eventually leads to fossilization of errors.

Re-written Version

Although it is true that group work activity creates a situation where learners are exposed to non-native speaking models, it has not been demonstrated that this leads to fossilization of errors any more than activities which are teacher-centred. Furthermore, as we learned in the previous activity, Porter's study showed that L2 learners did not produce any more errors in their speech when talking to learners at similar levels of proficiency than they did when speaking to learners at more advanced levels or native speakers. We also learned from the Long et al. study that there are several advantages to group work over teacher-centered activities when it comes to other aspects of learners' speech. For example, learners produce more language in group work. They also produce a greater variety of language forms and functions. In addition, other studies have demonstrated that learners can be taught to provide each other with useful corrective feedback in group work activity if this is carefully planned and learners are made aware of the need for accuracy practice within the context of their communicative group work.

*Alternative Procedure

☞ *The format used in this alternative is group discussion. By now, you'll know your group well enough to decide whether or not this format is applicable, that is if the participants will eagerly join in the discussion when you throw questions at them.*

1. Explain that the activity involves examining some of the "common sense" assumptions traditionally associated with classroom language learning, examining their validity, and re-phrasing them to reflect their greater understanding of the language learning process.

2. Tell the participants that there are 10 assumptions in all, divided in 5 sets, each roughly reflecting the contents of one of the 5 days in the module.

3. Inform the participants that you will deal with each assumption separately and that you expect them to react to each of them as a group.

4. Refer them to page 166 in their workbook, *Common Sense Assumptions* (page 217 in Workshop Leader's Manual) and ask them to check the assumptions they think are correct.

5. Then go over each one, leading the discussion, eliciting as much information as you can,encouraging the participants to share their experiences and opinions.

6. When all the participants have had their say and nothing can be added, distribute the answer keys and have them read the texts.

7. Invite comments and discussion once more.

☞ *You may wish to do this after each re-written version or wait till all the texts have been read.*

Day	5	
Activity	4	***Concluding Remarks***
Objective	To conclude the module on second language acquisition and to suggest follow-up reading	
Time	10 minutes	
References	Participants' Workbook, page 171 Appendix: *Research on Second Language Acquisition; What Can Teachers Use?*	
Resources	None required	

Procedure

Patsy Lightbown's article *Research on Second Language Acquisition:What Can Teachers Use?* should be read as a wrap-up to this module. It is printed in Appendix 5, pages 202-212 of participants' Workbook (see Appendix 6, pages 270-280, Workshop Leader's Manual).

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Age, Rate and Eventual Attainment in Second Language Acquisition[*]

Stephen D. Krashen, Michael A. Long, and Robin C. Scarcella

This paper presents evidence for three generalizations concerning the relationship between age, rate, and eventual attainment in second language acquisition:

(1) Adults proceed through early stages of syntactic and morphological development faster than children (where time and exposure are held constant).
(2) Older children acquire faster than younger children (again, in early stages of morphological and syntactic development where time and exposure are held constant).
(3) Acquirers who begin natural exposure to second languages during childhood generally achieve higher second language proficiency than those beginning as adults.

While recent research reports have claimed to be counter to the hypothesis that there is a critical period for language acquisition, the available literature is consistent with the three generalizations presented above.

One popular belief about second language acquisition is that younger-is-better, that younger acquirers are better at second language acquisition than older acquirers. Recently, certain research reports claim to counter this early sensitivity hypothesis; several of these papers imply that the literature on age and language acquisition is inconsistent, some showing older, others showing younger performers to be superior. (See Walburg, Hase and Pinzur Rasher 1978, McLaughlin 1977.) The purpose of this brief comment is to demonstrate that the available literature is consistent with three generalizations concerning the relationship between age, rate, and eventual attainment in second language acquisition: 1) Adults proceed through early stages of syntactic and morphological development faster than children (where time and exposure are held constant)[1]; 2) Older children acquire faster than younger children (again, in early stages of syntactic and morphological development where time and exposure are held constant);[2] and 3) Acquirers who begin natural exposure to

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[*] We thank Eugene J. Brière for helpful comments on this article.

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[1] Explanations for these relationships (e.g., neurological, cognitive or affective) will not be discussed here.

[2] Here, we do not distinguish "learn" and "acquire," making no claim as to whether conscious language *learning* or unconscious language *acquisition* are involved.

second languages during childhood generally achieve higher second language proficiency than those beginning as adults.

In other words, adults and older children in general initially acquire the second language faster than young children (older-is-better for rate of acquisition), but child second language acquirers will usually be superior in terms of ultimate attainment (younger-is-better in the long run). Distinguishing rate and attainment, then, resolves the apparent contradictions in the literature.

In order to provide support for these generalizations, we examined investigations of child-adult differences in eventual attainment in second language acquisition and short-term studies which compare children and adults acquiring second languages in informal, natural environments, as well as formal, classroom environments.

1. Investigations of Eventual Attainment: Long Term Studies

There have been surprisingly few studies investigating child-adult differences in eventual attainment in second language acquisition. The available studies all concur, however, that age of arrival in the country where the language is spoken is the best predictor of eventual attainment: 1) those who arrive as children attain higher levels of second language proficiency, and 2) after a certain period (see discussion below) length of residence (where length of residence taps linguistic interaction/input) is not a factor. (see Table 1)[1]

2. Investigations of Rate: Short-term Studies

2.1. *Comparisons of Adult/Child Differences.* The short-term studies comparing children and adults (see Table 2) show adults to be superior to children in rate. Treatment or length of residency in these studies varies from twenty-five minutes (Asher and Price 1969), an extremely short exposure time, to one year (Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle 1978a). (Compare this to Oyama's (1976) study in which the length of residence varied from five to eighteen years.) Interestingly, in Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1978a), adults, while clearly superior to young children in morphology and syntax, did not do better than the twelve to fifteen year-olds. Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle suggest that the different sorts of linguistic experience the groups received affected the results of their study.

2.2. *Comparisons of Older and Younger Child Second Language Acquirers.* The short term studies which compare older and younger children consistently show older children to be faster learners of syntax and morphology when the duration of the exposure to the second language is similar, whether the exposure to the second language is in natural (as in Table 3), or formal environments (as in Table 4).

The generalizations given here imply that younger acquirers catch up to

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[1] Since three out of four studies deal with pronunciation, it could be hypothesized that children are superior only for this aspect of linguistic competence. Oyama (1978) helps to counter this objection by using the sentence through noise test, considered a listening comprehension measure.

TABLE 1

Child-Adult Differences in Eventual Attainment in Second Language Acquisition

Study	*Ages Compared*[a]	*n*	*L1*	*L2*	*Measures*	*Results*
•Asher and Garcia 1969	1-6 7-12 13-19	19 37 15	Span.	Eng.	Sentence pronunciation task, judged by high school students	1-6 year old arrivals were closer to native speaker level; 13-19 year old arrivals were farthest. Those in the US 5-8 years were better than those in the US 1-4 years.
Seliger, Krashen, and Ladefoged 1975	below 10 10-15 over 16	91 100 173	varies	Eng., Heb.	Self-report[b]	Below 10: most (85%) report no accent. 10-15: 50% report accent, 50% report no accent. Over 16: 92% report accent. No effect for years lived in country.[c]
Oyama 1976	6-20	60	Ital.	Eng.	Read paragraph Tell anecdote (Rated for accent)	Correlation for accent and age of arrival in the United States (r = −.83[d]) No correlation for accent and years in the United States (r = −.02[e])
Oyama 1978	6-20	60	Ital.	Eng.	Sentence through noise task	Correlation for LC and age of arrival (r = −.57[f]) No significant correlation for LC and years in the United States (r = −.02[g])

[a] Age of arrival in country, not age when tested. (Age when tested = 7-19)

[b] Subjects were asked, "Do you think most ordinary Americans (Israelis) could tell now that you are not a native speaker of English (Hebrew)?"

[c] Comparisons done with the "no accent", 10-15 group only: mean years = 15, S.D. = 11.5; "Accent group" mean = 20.6, S.D. = 10.4. (Reported in Krashen and Seliger 1975.)

[d] Partial correlation, with years in the United States partialled out (paragraph reading score only).

[e] Partial correlation, with age of arrival partialled out (paragraph reading score only).

[f] Partial correlation, with years in the United States partialled out.

[g] Partial correlation, with age of arrival, actual age, partialled out.

Generalization: All studies agree that those who arrive as children attain higher levels of proficiency than those who arrive as adults.

TABLE 2

Children vs. Adults in Rate of Second Language Acquisition

Study	*Duration*	n	*L2*[a]	*Ages Compared*	*Treatment*	*Measures*	*Results*
Asher and Price 1967	25 minutes	134	Russian	Adult (college) 8, 10, 12 year-olds	Total Physical Response (TPR) Teaching	TPR	Adults outperformed all child groups
Olson and Samuels 1973	10 sessions	60	German	Adult (18–26) Junior High (14–15) Elementary (9.5–10.5)	"Phoneme drills"	Pronunciation	Adults = junior high Adults and Junior high students superior to elementary students
Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle 1978a	1 month–1 year	69	Dutch	3–15 year olds Adults	Natural Exposure	Pronunciation, Morphology, Imitation, Translation	12–15 best for morphology; adults next best followed by the 8–10 year-olds. Differences diminish over time.
Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle 1977	1 session	136	Dutch	5–31	Imitate 5 nonsense words, repeated 20 times	Pronunciation	Linear increase in pronunciation according to age

[a] In all cases, L1 = English.

Generalization: Adults are faster than small children, but not always better than 12–15 year olds in early stages of morphology and syntax development.

TABLE 3
Studies of Child Second Language Acquisition (Older versus Younger) Informal Environments with Similar Length of Exposure

Study	*Time of Residence*	*n*	*L2*	*Age*[a]	*Measures*	*Results*
Ekstrand 1976	Up to 2 years[b]	2,189	Swedish	8–17	Listening Comprehension, reading, free writing, pronunciation, speaking	Older children did better than younger children Linear relationship with age
Fathman 1975	1–3 years	200	English	6–15	SLOPE Test, picture description	11–15 year olds superior to 6–10 year olds for morphology and syntax. 6–10 year olds better for pronunciation (See footnote 4.)
Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle 1978a	1 month–1 year	approximately 90	Dutch	3–15	Pronunciation, morphology, Imitation, Translation	12 to 15 year-olds best for morphology and syntax; 8–10 year-olds next best. Differences diminish over time, (strongest at 1–3 months).
Ervin-Tripp 1974	maximum of 9 months	31	French	4–9	Comprehension (Acting out)	Older children superior for syntax, morphology, and pronunciation; 7–9 year-olds superior to 4–6 year-olds

[a] Age at which children were tested, not age at arrival in new country.

[b] "... only 6.2% of the pupils have a longer LOR (length of residence) than two years" (Ekstrand 1976:108).

Generalization: In all cases, older children acquire early syntax and morphology faster than younger children.

TABLE 4

Comparisons of Studies of Child Second Language Acquisition (Older versus Younger)[a]
Formal or Experimental Environments with Similar Treatments

Study	*Duration*	*n*	*L2*	*Grades/Ages*	*Treatment*	*Measures*	*Results*
Ekstrand 1978	1 year	335	English	grades 3, 4, 5 (ages 8–11)	"Audio-visual"	Imitation, Listening Comprehension (LC) Translation	Older children better than younger children: Linear relationship between age and second language learning
Asher and Price 1967	25 minutes	96	Russian	grades 8, 10, 14	Total Physical Response (TPR)	TPR	14 year-olds best, tend to be better than 8 year-olds
Olson and Samuels 1973	10 sessions	60	German	ages 9.5–10.5; 14–15	"Phoneme Drills"	Pronunciation	14 to 15 group superior to 9.5–10.5 group
Florander and Jansen 1968	80 hours, 320 hours	300 400	English	grades 4–6	EFL	Grammar, Vocabulary, Reading, LC	Grade 6 superior to younger groups. Difference lessens after 320 hours
Grinder, Otomo, and Toyota 1962	1 year	148	Japanese	grades 2–3	Audio-lingual	Vocabulary, LC, Pronunciation	Strong relationship between grade (age) and LC, some pronunciation; trend for older students to excel in vocabulary

[a] See also Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle, 1977, Table Two.

Generalization. In all cases, older children acquire faster than younger children.

older acquirers and, in the case of children compared to adults, eventually surpass them. The literature allows us to make some preliminary generalizations about the amount of time this catch-up process takes. For morphology and syntax, children apparently surpass adults in about one year. Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1978b) report that their 8-10 year old subjects surpassed adult acquirers of Dutch after one year on nearly all measures of syntax and morphology, and the 6-7 year olds surpassed the adults on some measures, including speech fluency. Younger children may take a little longer to catch up to older children. The 6-10 year olds in Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle's study had still not caught up to the 12-15 year old group after one year. We assume both groups eventually attain native or near-native proficiency with continued interactions in Dutch. Also, in Fathman (1975), older children (11-15) maintained a slight superiority in syntax over 6-10 year olds even after three years in the country. (This difference may not have been statistically significant, however.)[4]

A separate class of studies compares children who begin the study of second languages in formal circumstances at different ages (for example, foreign language in the elementary school, FLES, beginning at age eight is compared to FLES at age eleven.) The results of such studies usually indicate that children starting FLES later catch up to those beginning earlier. For instance, Burstall's 1975 study, involving several thousand children studying French in elementary schools, essentially reports no differences in French attainment between those starting French at ages eight and eleven and those starting French at age sixteen. Similar results have been reported in other studies, summarized in Table 5.

This finding could be considered consistent with Generalization Two (that older children acquire faster than younger children); the younger children in these studies acquired at a so much slower pace than the older children that extra time counted for very little. Other explanations are also possible. For example, in Oller and Nagoto's (1974) study, those who had early FLES were mixed

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[4] Several studies also report that older children acquire phonological competence (pronunciation) faster than younger children (Ervin-Tripp, 1974, Ekstrand, 1976, for example). Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1977) report that the ability to imitate nonsense words in a second language increases linearly with age, using subjects 5 to 31. Fathman (1975), however, reports that her younger subjects were superior to her older subjects. This difference may be due to the different age groups studied (Ervin-Tripp compared 7-9 to 4-6 year olds, Ekstrand's sample consisted of 8-11 year olds, while Fathman compared 11-15 year olds to 6-10 year olds) or length of exposure. Fathman's subjects were in the United States from one to three years while maximum length of exposure for Ervin-Tripp's subjects was nine months. As we have seen earlier, it may take quite a while for syntax in younger children to catch up to the level attained by older children. Phonological competence, however, may catch up very rapidly. Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1977) report that "age differences (in pronunciation of Dutch as a second language) disappeared by 4-5 months after starting to learn the second language . . . by 10-11 months . . . the younger children still excelled in pronouncing some sounds, though there was still no overall age difference" (p. 357). (Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle also report, however, that even after 18 months, few subjects were native-like, regardless of age.) Thus, the younger children in Fathman's study may have caught up with and (temporarily) surpassed the older children in pronunciation. In Ervin-Tripp's study, there may not have been enough time for this to have taken place. Asher and Garcia, however, report that their subjects who were in the United States from 5-8 years outperformed those in the United States 1-4 years on their pronunciation task. This result implies that acquisition of phonology may take somewhat longer. Further research may settle this issue.

TABLE 5

Child Second Language Studies: Formal Environments with Dissimilar Amounts of Exposure
(Older Children Catch-up Studies)

Study	*Ages/Grades Compared*	*n*	*L1*	*L2*	*Measures*	*Results*
Burstall 1975	starting FLES at age 8 *versus* starting at age 11	approx. 17,000	English	French		At age 16, no difference (except in LC)[a] group starting at age 8 = group starting at age 11
Bland & Keisler 1966	Kindergarten *versus* grade five	4 6	English	French	oral production	Fifth graders took less time to reach criterion (4.5 hours vs. 12.5–17.5 hrs.)
Oller & Nagato 1974	7th, 8th, and 9th grades; one group had FLES in grades 1–6, the other did not.	233	Japanese	English	cloze	+FLES superior to −FLES at grade 7; less difference at grade 9; no difference at grade 11
Ramirez & Politzer 1978	ESL/BE starting in junior high school *versus* ESL/BE starting in kindergarten	21 46	Spanish	English	LC production	After ½ year, junior high school students nearly at grade 3 level
Vocolo 1967	"second year high school French" tenth graders with one year high school French *versus* ninth graders with 3 years FLES (grades 5–8)	31 31	English	French	MLCT	3 years FLES group only slightly better than group with one year of high school French

[a] Abbreviations:
FLES = Foreign Language in the Elementary School
LC = Listening Comprehension
BE = Bilingual Education
MLCT = Modern Language Cooperative Test

Generalization: FLES studies show that older children catch up to children who have had earlier FLES.

in with those who had no FLES; thus the early starters may have had to mark time (p. 18) while the others caught up.

3. Discussion

The literature provides no evidence which is seriously inconsistent with any of the above generalizations. Walburg et al. showed that language proficiency of children of Japanese businessmen was directly related to time in the United States and not the age of arrival, a finding which Walburg et al. consider to be counter to the "Optimal Age Hypothesis." Their study is not even potentially in conflict with Generalizations One and Three, however, since no adults were actually involved in the study. Subjects' ages at the time of testing ranged from six to fifteen and most had been in the United States a range from zero to twelve years.

Although the study by Walburg et al. differs from others in failing to find a superiority for older versus younger children, this may be due to the measures used (self-report, teacher-report); tests which specifically focus on syntax and morphology might show more agreement with other studies. Also, there may have been enough time for the younger children to have caught up to the older children; recall that most subjects had been in the United States "three to four years" and some stayed as long as twelve years. It should be emphasized that Walburg et al. agree with other studies in failing to find a superiority for the younger child with respect to rate of acquisition.

To conclude, the available literature is consistent with the generalizations presented earlier. Any hypothesis dealing with the relationship between age, rate, and eventual attainment in second language acquisition needs to account for the data from the variety of studies presented here, as does any general theory of language acquisition. Moreover, any educational decisions pertaining to second language learning and teaching (e.g., FLES, bilingual education) must also consider all of the empirical evidence.

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The Significance of Learners' Errors

S P CORDER

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When one studies the standard works on the teaching of modern languages it comes as a surprise to find how cursorily the authors deal with the question of learners' errors and their correction. It almost seems as if they are dismissed as a matter of no particular importance, as possible annoying, distracting, but inevitable by-products of the process of learning a language about which the teacher should make as little fuss as possible. It is of course true that the application of linguistic and psychological theory to the study of language learning added a new dimension to the discussion of errors; people now believed they had a principled means for accounting for these errors, namely that they were the result of interference in the learning of a second language from the habits of the first language. The major contribution of the linguist to language teaching was seen as an intensive contrastive study of the systems of the second language and the mother tongue of the learner; out of this would come an inventory of the areas of difficulty which the learner would encounter and the value of this inventory would be to direct the teacher's attention to these areas so that he might devote special care and emphasis in his teaching to the overcoming, or even avoiding, of these predicted difficulties. Teachers have not always been very impressed by this contribution from the linguist for the reason that their practical experience has usually already shown them where these difficulties lie and they have not felt that the contribution of the linguist has provided them with any significantly new information. They noted for example that many of the errors with which they were familiar were not predicted by the linguist anyway. The teacher has been on the whole, therefore, more concerned with *how* to deal with these areas of difficulty than with the simple identification of them, and here has reasonably felt that the linguist has had little to say to him.

In the field of methodology there have been two schools of thought in respect of learners' errors. Firstly the school which maintains that if we were to achieve a perfect teaching method the errors would never be committed in the first place, and therefore the occurrence of errors is merely a sign of the present inadequacy of our teaching techniques. The philosophy of the second school is that we live in an imperfect world and consequently errors will always occur in spite of our best efforts. Our ingenuity should be concentrated on techniques for dealing with errors after they have occurred.

Both these points of view are compatible with the same theoretical standpoint about language and language learning, psychologically behaviourist and linguistically taxonomic. Their application to language teaching is known as the audiolingual or fundamental skills method.

Both linguistics and psychology are in a state at the present time of what Chomsky has called 'flux and agitation' (Chomsky, 1966). What seemed to be well established doctrine a few years ago is now the subject of extensive debate. The consequence of this for language teaching is likely to be far reaching and we are perhaps only now beginning to feel its effects. One effect has been perhaps to shift the emphasis away from a preoccupation with *teaching* towards a study of *learning*. In the first instance this has shown itself as a renewed attack upon the problem of the acquisition of the mother tongue. This has inevitably led to a consideration of the question whether there are any parallels between the processes of acquiring the mother tongue and the learning of a second language. The usefulness of the distinction between acquisition and learning has been emphasised by Lambert (1966) and the possibility that the latter may benefit from a study of the former has been suggested by Carroll (1966).

The differences between the two are obvious but not for that reason easy to explain: that the learning of the mother tongue is inevitable, whereas, alas, we all know that there is no such inevitability about the learning of a second language; that the learning of the mother tongue is part of the whole maturational process of the child, whilst learning a second language normally begins only after the maturational process is largely complete; that the infant starts with no overt language behaviour, while in the case of the second language learner such behaviour, of course, exists; that the motivation (if we can properly use the term in the context) for learning a first language is quite different from that for learning a second language.

On examination it becomes clear that these obvious differences imply nothing about the *processes* that take place in the learning of first and second language. Indeed the most widespread hypothesis about how languages are learned, which I have called behaviourist, is assumed to apply in both circumstances. These hypotheses are well enough known not to require detailing here, and so are the objections to them. If then these hypotheses about language learning are being questioned and new hypotheses being set up to account for the process of child language acquisition, it would seem reasonable to see how far they might also apply to the learning of a second language.

Within this new context the study of errors takes on a new importance and will I believe contribute to a verification or rejection of the new hypothesis.

This hypothesis states that a human infant is born with an innate predisposition to acquire language; that he must be exposed to language for the acquisition process to start; that he possesses an internal mechanism of unknown nature which enables him from the limited data available to him to construct a grammar of a particular language. How he does this is largely unknown and is the field of intensive study at the present time by linguists and psychologists. Miller (1964) has pointed out that if we wished to create an automaton to replicate a child's performance, the order in which it tested various aspects of the grammar could only be decided after careful analysis of the successive stages of language acquisition by human children. The first steps therefore in such a study are seen to be a longitudinal description of a child's language throughout the course of its development. From such a description it is eventually hoped to develop a picture of the procedures adopted by the child to acquire language (McNeill, 1966).

The application of this hypothesis to second language learning is not new and is essentially that proposed fifty years ago by H. E. Palmer (1922). Palmer maintained that we were all endowed by nature with the capacity for assimilating language and that this capacity remained available to us in a latent state after the acquisition of a primary language. The adult was seen as capable as the child of acquiring a foreign language. Recent work (Lenneberg, 1967) suggests that the child who fails for any reason i.e. deafness, to acquire a primary language before the age of 12 thereafter rapidly loses the capacity to acquire language behaviour at all. This finding does not of course carry with it the implication that the language learning capacity of those who have successfully learned a primary language also atrophies in the same way. It still remains to be shown that the process of learning a second language is of a fundamentally different nature from the process of primary acquisition.

If we postulate the same mechanism, then we may also postulate that the procedures or strategies adopted by the learner of the second language are fundamentally the same. The principal feature that then differentiates the two operations is the presence or absence of motivation. If the acquisition of the first language is a fulfilment of the predisposition to develop language behaviour, then the learning of the second language involves the replacement of the predisposition of the infant by some other force. What this consists of is in the context of this paper irrelevant.

Let us say therefore that, *given motivation*, it is inevitable that a human being will learn a second language if he is exposed to the language data. Study of language aptitude does in some measure support such a view since motivation and intelligence appear to be the two principal factors which correlate significantly with achievement in a second language.

I propose therefore as a working hypothesis that some at least of the *strategies* adopted by the learner of a second language are substantially the same as those by which a first language is acquired. Such a proposal does not imply that the course or *sequence* of learning is the same in both cases.

We can now return to the consideration of errors made by learners. When a two-year-old child produces an utterance such as 'This mummy chair' we do not normally call this deviant, ill-formed, faulty, incorrect or whatever. We do not regard it as an error in any sense at all, but rather as a normal childlike communication which provides evidence of the state of his linguistic development at that moment. Our response to that behaviour has certain of the characteristics of what would be called 'correction' in a classroom situation. Adults have a very strong tendency to repeat and expand the child's utterance in an adult version; something like 'Yes, dear, that's Mummy's chair'.

No one expects a child learning his mother-tongue to produce from the earliest stages only forms which in adult terms are correct or non-deviant. We interpret his 'incorrect' utterances as being evidence that he is in the process of acquiring language and indeed, for those who attempt to describe his knowledge of the language at any point in its development, it is the 'errors' which provide the important evidence. As Brown and Frazer (1964) point out the best evidence that a child possesses construction rules is the occurrence of systematic errors, since, when the child speaks correctly, it is quite possible that he is only repeating something that he has heard. Since we do not know what the total input has been we cannot rule out this possibility. It is by reducing the language to a simpler system than it is that the child reveals his tendency to induce rules.

In the case of the second language learner it might be supposed that we *do* have some knowledge of what the input has been, since this is largely within the control of the teacher. Nevertheless it would be wise to introduce a qualification here about the control of input (which is of course what we call the syllabus). The simple fact of presenting a certain linguistic form to a learner in the classroom does not necessarily qualify it for the status of input, for the reason that input is 'what goes in' not what is *available* for going in, and we may reasonably suppose that it is the learner who controls this input, or more properly his intake. This may well be determined by the characteristics of his language acquisition mechanism and not by those of the syllabus. After all, in the mother-tongue learning situation the data available as input is relatively vast, but it is the child who selects what shall be the input.

Ferguson (1966) has recently made the point that our syllabuses have been based at best upon impressionistic judgements and vaguely conceived theoretical principles where they have had any considered foundations at all. The suggestion that we should take more account of the learner's needs in planning our syllabuses is not new, but has not apparently led to any investigations, perhaps because of the methodological difficulties of determining what the learner's needs might actually be. Carroll (1955) made such a proposal when he suggested it might be worth creating a problem-solving situation for the learner in which he must find, by enquiring either of the teacher or a dictionary appropriate verbal responses for solving the problem. He pointed out that such a hypothesis contained certain features of what was believed to occur in the process of language acquisition by the child.

A similar proposal actually leading to an experiment was made by Mager but not in connection with language teaching (Mager, 1961); it is nevertheless worth quoting his own words:

> Whatever sequencing criterion is used it is one which the user calls a 'logical' sequence. But although there are several schemes by which sequencing can be accomplished and, although it is generally agreed that an effective sequence is one which is meaningful to the learner, the information sequence to be assimilated by the learner is traditionally dictated entirely by the instructor. We generally fail to consult the learner in the matter except to ask him to maximize the effectiveness of whatever sequence we have already decided upon.

He points out as the conclusions he draws from his small scale experiment that the next step would be to determine whether the learner-generated sequence, or, as we might call it, his *built-in syllabus*, is in some way more efficient than the instructor-generated sequence. It seems entirely plausible that it would be so. The problem is to determine whether there exists such a built-in syllabus and to describe it. It is in such an investigation that the study of learners' errors would assume the role it already plays in the study of child language acquisition, since, as has been pointed out, the key concept in both cases is that the learner is using a definite system of language at every point in his development, although it is not the adult system in the one case, nor that of the second language in the other. The learner's errors are evidence of this system and are themselves systematic.

The use of the term systematic in this context implies, of course, that there may be errors which are random, or, more properly, the systematic nature of which cannot be readily discerned. The opposition between systematic and non-systematic errors is important. We are all aware that in normal adult speech in our native language we are continually committing errors of one sort or another. These, as we have been so often reminded recently, are due to memory lapses, physical states, such as tiredness and psychological conditions such as strong emotion. These are adventitious artefacts of linguistic performance and do not reflect a defect in our knowledge of our own language. We are normally immediately aware of them when they occur and can correct them with more or less complete assurance. It would be quite unreasonable to expect the learner of a second language not to exhibit such slips of the tongue (or pen), since he is subject to similar external and internal conditions when performing in his first or second language. We must therefore make a distinction between those errors which are the product of such chance circumstances and those which reveal his underlying knowledge of the language to date, or, as we may call it his *transitional competence*. The errors of performance will characteristically be unsystematic and the errors of competence, systematic. As Miller (1966) puts it, 'It would be meaningless to state rules for making mistakes'. It will be useful therefore hereafter to refer to errors of performance as *mistakes*, reserving the term *error* to refer to the systematic errors of the learner from which we are able to reconstruct his knowledge of the language to date, i.e. his *transitional competence*.

Mistakes are of no significance to the process of language learning. However the problem of determining what is a learner's mistake and what a learner's error is one of some difficulty and involves a much more sophisticated study and analysis of errors than is usually accorded them.

A learner's errors, then, provide evidence of the system of the language that he is using (i.e. has learned) at a particular point in the course (and it must be repeated that he is using some system, although it is not yet the right system). They are significant in three different ways. First to the teacher, in that they tell him, *if* he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn. Second, they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the language. Thirdly (and in a sense this is their most important aspect) they are indispensable to the learner himself, because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn. It is a way the learner has of testing his hypotheses about the nature of the language he is learning. The making of errors then is a strategy employed both by children acquiring their mother tongue and by those learning a second language.

Although the following dialogue was recorded during the study of child language acquisition, it bears unmistakable similarities to dialogues which are a daily experience in the second language teaching classroom:

Mother: Did Billy have his egg cut up for him at breakfast?
Child: Yes, I showeds him.
Mother: You what?
Child: I showed him.
Mother: You showed him?

Child: I seed him.
Mother: Ah, you saw him.
Child: Yes, I saw him.

Here the child, within a short exchange, appears to have tested three hypotheses: one relating to the concord of subject and verb in a past tense, another about the meaning of *show* and *see* and a third about the form of the irregular past tense of *see*. It only remains to be pointed out that if the child had answered *I saw him* immediately, we would have no means of knowing whether he had merely repeated a model sentence or had already learned the three rules just mentioned. Only a longitudinal study of the child's development could answer such a question. It is also interesting to observe the techniques used by the mother to 'correct' the child. Only in the case of one error did she provide the correct form herself: *You saw him*. In both the other cases, it was sufficient for her to query the child's utterance in such a form as: *you what?* or *You showed him?* Simple provision of the correct form may not always be the only, or indeed the most effective, form of correction since it bars the way to the learner testing alternative hypotheses. Making a learner try to discover the right form could often be more instructive to both learner and teacher. This is the import of Carroll's proposal already referred to.

We may note here that the utterance of a correct form cannot be taken as proof that the learner has learned the systems which would generate that form in a native speaker, since he may be merely repeating a heard utterance, in which case we should class such behaviour, not as language, but in Spolsky's term (Spolsky, 1966) 'language-like behaviour'. Nor must we overlook the fact that an utterance which is superficially non-deviant is not evidence of a mastery of the language systems which would generate it in a native speaker since such an utterance must be semantically related to the situational context. The learner who produced 'I want to know the English' might have been uttering an unexceptionable sentiment, but it is more likely that he was expressing the wish to know the English language. Only the situational context could show whether his utterance was an error or not.

Although it has been suggested that the strategies of learning a first and second language may be the same, it is nevertheless necessary at this point to posit a distinction between the two. Whilst one may suppose that the first language learner has an unlimited number of hypotheses about the nature of the language he is learning which must be tested (although strong reasons have been put forward for doubting this) we may certainly take it that the task of the second language learner is a simpler one: that the only hypotheses he needs to test are: 'Are the systems of the new language the same or different from those of the language I know?' 'And if different, what is their nature?' Evidence for this is that a large number, but by no means all, of his errors, are related to the systems of his mother tongue. These are ascribed to interference from the habits of the mother tongue, as it is sometimes expressed. In the light of the new hypotheses they are best not regarded as the persistence of old habits, but rather as signs that the learner is investigating the systems of the new language. Saporta (1966) makes this point clear. 'The internal structure of the (language acquisition) device, i.e. the learner, has gone relatively unexplored except to point out that one of its components is the grammar of the learner's native language. It has generally been assumed that the effect of this component has been inhibitory rather than facilitative'. It will be evident that the position taken here is that the learner's possession of his native language is facilitative and that errors are not to be regarded as signs of inhibition, but simply as evidence of his strategies of learning.

We have been reminded recently of Von Humboldt's statement that we cannot really teach language, we can only create conditions in which it will develop spontaneously in the mind in its own way. We shall never improve our ability to create such favourable conditions until we learn more about the way a learner learns and what his built-in syllabus is. When we do know this (and the learner's errors will, if systematically studied, tell us something about this) we may begin to be more critical of our cherished notions. We may be able to allow the learner's innate strategies to dictate our practice and determine our syllabus; we may learn to adapt ourselves to *his* needs rather than impose upon him *our* preconceptions of *how* he ought to learn, *what* he ought to learn and *when* he ought to learn it.

"Natural" Orders of Acquisition in First and Second Language Development

We have learned that child language is viewed as being systematic — that children go through certain stages in their language development in an ordered and somewhat predictable manner. In this text, we will discuss the development of some grammatical features of child language. Specifically, we will look at how and in what order children learn to form questions in a first language, how they learn negatives and also, in what order they learn inflections and function words. We will also look at how and in what order children learning a second language in a natural (or uninstructed) setting develop these aspects of the grammatical system. We'll begin our discussion with the development of questions in child language.

1. **Questions**

*Children learning questions in a first language start out by producing questions without changing the internal structure of the sentence. With yes / no questions, for example, they produce questions as "You like dis ?" or "I have some ?" simply adding rising intonation to a sentence to indicate that it's a question. With wh-questions, they simply put the question word at the beginning of the sentence, for example "Why you caught it?" Gradually, children begin to notice that the structure of questions is different from declaratives, and they may begin to produce questions such as "Can I go?"or "is that mine?" But they may then generalize, incorrectly, that yes / no questions are formed by putting a verb at the beginning of the sentence, without changing the internal structure. This leads them to ask questions such as "Is the teddy is tired?" and "Do I can have a cookie?" "Do" is the most frequent element used in this way, but "is" and "can" or other auxiliaries are also found. Some youngsters even adopt whole chunks of a frequently heard question, such as "Do you have", and produce questions such as "*Do you have *you like ice cream?"*

Later, children begin to master the use of the inversion with the auxiliary verb, including the addition of do in sentences in which no auxiliary is expressed, as in the adult system.

There is some evidence that at this stage, children can either invert subject and auxiliary verb or use a question word, but not do both. Therefore, we may find inversion in yes / no questions (e. g. , "Can he eat the cookie?") but not in wh-questions (e. g., "Where I can draw them?"

Later, the child is able to combine both operations and say for example, "Why can he go out?" However, it may still be beyond the child's ability to carry out a third or fourth operation, making it difficult for him to negate the question as well as invert it, for example, so he produces "Why he can't go out?"

There are some other things about question development which are very similar for all children. For example, I'm sure if you were asked which wh-question is the first one which children typically produce, you would probably all come up with some version of "Whatsat" — either whassat, whatsit, whaddis, or whatisdis ! These forms are first learned as a whole and it is some time before the child learns that there are variations of the form such as "What is that ?" and "What are these ?" The child soon learns also to ask where and who, but why, how and when come somewhat later. Furthermore, as they learn to ask a greater variety of questions, children can only answer those questions that they can already ask. That is, children begin by answering what, who and where questions quite well, since this is the kind of information their own language can express — information about the here and now — about objects, people and places. However, they do not understand the concepts of manner, causation, purpose or time until later and therefore, often give wrong answers to some wh-questions. For example, if asked "When would you like to have lunch ?" a two-year-old child may reply "In the kitchen" or when asked "Why are you eating now?" a child might respond "an apple".

Most children start to ask why before how and when questions. Nevertheless, the why questions are the most complex for children to learn, not to say the most frustrating at times for adults to answer, as children go through what is often referred to as their «why phase». It seems that for the development of understanding of why, a child has to observe and participate in a large number of conversations that include why questions and answers before he knows when it is appropriate to ask why and what is considered to be an acceptable answer.

But, what about children who are learning a second language ? Do they learn to form questions in a similar way ? Several studies have been carried out to investigate how natural second language learners form questions, whether they go through similar stages and how these stages compare with children learning first languages. Three broad stages for both wh-questions and yes/no questions have been identified. As with the development of other systems, these stages overlap considerably.

The first stage is identical to the initial stage in first language acquisition, in that learners form their questions without changing the internal structure of the sentence. With yes/no questions, they simply add rising intonation without changing the word order in the sentence as in "ou want to see this ?" and " I told you this?" With wh-questions, the question word is simply placed at the beginning of the sentence as in "Where she is going" and "How you do this?"

In the second stage of question development, just as with first language, the learner notices the pre-sentential element but doesn't understand where it comes from. He overgeneralizes and thinks that he can simply put a verbal element at the beginning of all Yes / No questions. Thus, he produces «Is the door is open or closed?" Eventually, the learner starts to invert subject and auxiliary but its use may not be consistent. It seems to occur first with "to be" and "can" but because learners have not yet fully mastered how to use these forms, they will say things like "Do you want this" on the one hand, and "Do you can write this?"on the other.

In the third stage, the use of inversion is more wide-spread and becomes regularized. However, learners will sometimes inflect the verb twice in forming questions saying things like "Where did he bought it" and "What does he says ?"

With second language learners learning to form questions in natural settings, then, there appears to be a sequence of development which is typical of most learners, and the stages are similar in most respects to first language question development. there are also differences which seem to be due to influence of the mother-tongue as well as other individual factors. What is perhaps most striking however, is that even children whose first language has subject-auxiliary inversion for questions, go through a phase of using the declarative word order in forming questions in their second language[1]

2. *Negatives*

Perhaps the first point to make about how children learn about negation in a language is just how quickly they understand and use the functions of negation. As we know, there are a number of different functions associated with the negative in English. For example, we can deny, reject, disagree with and refuse something by using the negative. Interestingly, children seem to be very sensitive to the various functions of the negative form at a very early stage and understand and use the fundamental aspects of negation right from the very start. However, even though they have this awareness of how negation functions, it takes some time before they have learned the grammatical rules to express the variety of negative functions.

It is probably not all that surprising to learn that the child's first negatives usually consist of the word no which is simply tagged onto a word or phrase, either at the beginning or at the end. Many of the earliest utterances of this type consist of a simple proposition plus a negative as in "No go". "No cookie" or "No sing a song" or even "No Mommy comb hair" when the child is running away from the hairbrush ! Some children adopt the word "any" as a negator, shaking their heads and saying "Any juice!".

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[1] *Even though written and formal spoken French has subject-auxiliary inversion for questions, children and adults in informal speech tend to use the declarative construction "Tu viens avec nous ?" "Pourquoi il a fait ça?" Thus when a French speaker learning English fails to use subject-auxiliary inversion, he may be transferring structures from his L1.*

The second stage that most children go through is when the negative element is inserted into a more complex sentence. At this stage, children may add forms of the negative other than no. *For example, children may use* don't *or* can't *or* won't. *They usually begin to use these negative forms, in fact, before they use* do *or* can *or* will. *Furthermore, since they do not yet inflect these for different persons or tenses, they end up producing utterances like "He don't want it".*

In the third stage of development children begin to produce the correct form of the verbs "do". "be" and modal verbs such as "can" to suit the person, number and tense. This enables them to produce sentences like "You can't have supper".

Children learning English as a second language in natural settings (i.e. without formal instruction) seem to go through similar stages of negation development. However, there are also some differences in this development which may be due to influences of their first language and other individual factors. Four stages have been identified in an attempt to describe the development of negation in natural *second language learners' speech.*

In the first stage, second language learners, like first language learners, typically place the negative element (usually no *or* not*) before the verb or the element being negated. For example "No bicycle" or "no have any sand" or "I not like it". Some learners have a preference for* no *which may be related to transfer from their first language. Spanish speakers, for example, tend to use the* no *form most often since that corresponds with the negative form in Spanish. There is also some evidence that these negative elements are used differently by individual learners depending on the part of speech being qualified. For example, while some learners have been found to use* not *when a copula (the verb* be*) is required and* no *in other linguistic contexts, other learners have been found to use* no *consistently as a negative marker in all contexts at this particular stage.*

In the second stage, no *and* not *are dominated by* don't. *At this stage,* don't *is not marked for person, number or tense and it may even be used before modals like* can *and* should. *In fact, it seems at this stage, that some learners simply replace* no *and* not *with* don't *and produce sentences like "He don't like it" and "I don't can sing".*

The next stage is one where learners begin to place the negative element after auxiliary verbs like are, is, can *etc. This produces sentences like "You can't go there"and "He can't eat nothing". At this stage, the* don't *form is still not fully analysed.*

In the final stage, however, do *performs its full function as a marker of tense and person. So, learners can say things like "It doesn't work", and "We didn't have supper". For some time, however, learners may continue to mark tense on both the auxiliary and the verb producing sentences like "I didn't went there" and "She doesn't wants to go".*

This division of learners' development into stages suggests a neatness and regularity which may be misleading. In reality, the stages are not so separate and learners may use a number of different forms at one point in time, a "stage" being identified by the emergence or increasing frequency of a particular form rather than by the absence of an earlier one. Nevertheless, the research evidence does suggest that second language learners in natural settings go through similar stages as they acquire the negative and that, to a large extent, these stages are similar to those which are observed in first language learning.

3. *Grammatical Morphemes*

Much research has focused on how children develop inflections and function words, for example, how they learn about putting an s inflection on the third singular in the simple present tense as in "She sings" or "He eats" or how they learn to use the article "a" or "he" or learn to put and "ed" on the past tense of regular verbs. These small grammatical markers are sometimes referred to as grammatical morphemes.

One of the best-known studies which investigated the development of grammatical morphemes in child first language development is one carried out by a psycholinguist named Roger Brown in the late 60's and early 70's. He studied how three children, Adam, Eve and Sarah, learned 14 of these morphemes over time. The morphemes which Brown studied include the following.

present progressive «-ing» (She is running)
plural "-s" (two books)
irregular past forms (She went)
possessive "s" (daddy's hat)
copula (yes, she is; she's a nice girl)
articles "he" and "a"
regular past "-ed" (She walked)
third person singular simple present "-s" (She runs)
auxiliary "be" (he's coming)

Of course, children do not master each of these morphemes suddenly, but gradually, over a period of time. Therefore, one of the problems with doing research such as this is deciding how to determine that a particular morpheme has in fact been "acquired". Brown used the "Obligatory Context" criterion.That is, he decided that if a child produced the correct morpheme in 90% of the contexts where it was required, he would consider this morpheme to be acquired. Using this criterion, he found that the three children studied acquired the 14 morphemes he studied in a remarkably similar sequence. Among the first morphemes to be mastered by the children were the progressive "-ing" and plural "-s"; the latest were the third person singular "-", and the auxiliary "be". Furthermore, a child who had mastered the grammatical morphemes at the bottom of the list was sure to have mastered those at the top of the list, but the reverse was not true. Thus, Brown could claim there was evidence for a *sequence or order of acquisition. The children mastered the morphemes at different rates, however. For example, Eve had mastered nearly all the morphemes before she was two years old while Sarah was nearly four before she reached the same level.*

Brown's study involved only three children and took years to complete because he had to wait for the children to develop the various grammatical morphemes. Some other researchers (Jill and Peter de Villiers) wanted to find out if Brown's order would be found in a larger number of children, but they wanted to do so in a way that would take less time. So they recorded the speech of children in a nursery school and then compared the children in terms of how many morphemes they used correctly in 90% of the contexts where they were required. They found that children who correctly used the morphemes which Adam and Eve and Sarah had acquired late (for example, the copula (she's tired) and the third person singular simple present (she plays) were also correct in using the ones which Adam, Eve and Sarah had acquired earlier (for example, the plurals and the progressive -ing), but those who accurately used the "early" morphemes had not necessarily mastered the "late" ones. The children mastered the morphemes at different ages — just as Adam and Eve and Sarah had done, but the order of their acquisition was very similar. These children were similar to each other and similar to Adam, Eve and Sarah.

The study carried out by Brown is called a longitudinal study. This means that he studied the same learners over a period of time. The deVilliers' study was a cross-sectional study, which means that they looked at a group of children who were at different ages and stages of development, and then they made an informed guess about what the sequence or order of acquisition was for an individual child.

The similarity between Brown's and the deVilliers' morpheme acquisition research suggested that cross-sectional studies of morpheme acquisition, which take much less time to complete, produce essentially the same results.

Several studies to examine the development of grammatical morphemes have been carried out with children who have learned English as a second language in a natural environment. For the most part, these studies have examined a smaller number of morphemes than the original Brown and deVilliers studies did and most have been cross-sectional in nature. The researchers took samples from a large number of learners at one point in time, scored each morpheme for accuracy in the learners' speech and came up with an «accuracy» order for the morphemes. These studies were done with learners of different ages and from different first language backgrounds.

The overall results of the studies revealed an order which, while not the same as that found in the first language studies, was similar among children from different first language backgrounds. This suggests that natural second language learners acquire grammatical morphemes in much the same way that first language learners do and that this natural sequence is not determined only or even mainly by the child's first language.

Although a review of all the «morpheme acquisition» studies suggests that the learner's first language has a more important influence on acquisition orders than some researchers have claimed, there are some very strong patterns of similarity which cannot be explained by transfer from the first language.

There are still some unanswered questions in the morpheme acquisition literature. Nonetheless, it does seem as if second language learners have a tendency to acquire a set of English morphemes in a certain order. Just how much variation in this order is due to mother-tongue influence, the situation in which the learner language is observed, and individual learner factors is something we will continue to discuss in this and the next module.

We can conclude this lecture by saying that there are indeed features of first language learner speech which develop in systematic and predictable ways. We have seen examples of this in the development of interrogation, negation and grammatical morphemes. Furthermore, it appears that second language development for learners in natural *setting proceeds along similar lines. However, there is also evidence for some individual or group variation which we will continue to explore in this and the next module on language acquisition.*

Core ESL in Quebec: What results can we expect?*

Every Canadian knows – either personally or through radio and television – adult francophone Quebecers who speak English. Some speak it much better than others, of course, but it does not surprise us when we encounter a francophone who speaks English. In the past, many of these individuals learned English at work or by attending English-language schools. The historical conditions under which many francophones learned English have changed dramatically; the increased use of French in public life in Quebec has diminished the likelihood that young francophones will have the need or the opportunity to learn English "on the job," and under the French Language Charter, francophone students no longer have the option of attending English-language schools. This has a very great importance as we consider the role ESL classes will play in the learning of English by francophone Quebecers. We need to take into account the real and perceived needs which francophone students have for ESL and the reasonable expectations we may have for meeting these needs in core ESL programs. Considering that French-language schools do not offer immersion programs, the maximum number of hours of instruction in English is 700 in the core program over eight years. What can be accomplished in these courses? What results can we expect?

It is perhaps best to begin by saying what we cannot expect: fluent bilinguals. There is nothing surprising about this really. Everything we know about second language acquisition tells us that it takes time. In contrast to core ESL, new Canadian immigrant children or anglophone in total French immersion receive over 1000 hours of exposure to their second language in one year. An extended or intensive period of exposure may not be a sufficient condition for the development of second language mastery, but it is a necessary one.

What *can* we expect, then? I would like to discuss what I believe to be the realistic expectations in terms of two objectives: the development of positive attitudes toward using and learning English and the development of language skills as such.

We can expect students to develop language skills – comprehension and production – which will prepare them to meet their own future needs for learning and using English. On an individual basis, these needs may range from survival communication skills for occasional trips to Nova Scotia or Alberta to reading textbooks in a computer science course or serving tourists in a shop on St. Catherine Street. ESL courses can prepare students for such a variety of needs by helping them develop tools for approaching the language: strategies for using what they *know* to help them interpret what they *don't* know, strategies for communicating meaning even when they don't know the exact word or phrase, strategies for asking the right question – of a text or a conversational partner – in order to get more pertinent information. I believe that the new "communication-based" programs developed by the Quebec ministère de l'Éducation are designed to prepare students in just this way. As noted in a previous issue of *Dialogue* (1982, 7 (1): 8), these new programs have been "designed to move away from the concept of learning as product-oriented to a process-oriented experience."

One of the important ways in which ESL courses can prepare students for such a great variety of needs is by exposing them to a variety of examples of authentic English. From the earliest weeks of ESL instruction in Grade 4 a student can read the list of ingredients on food product labels and understand contextualized instructions. Grade 6 students can follow spoken and written directions, play many language-based games, and understand weather reports. Secondary students can read a short story or a newspaper, understand television drama dialogue, and learn facts about geography, science, or history from reading selections from English books or magazines. Guided exposure to such authentic language builds students' confidence in their ability to handle "real English" and thus makes them more willing to take advantage of out-of-classroom opportunities to use and learn the language. It is this confidence-building which contributes to the development of positive attitudes toward using and learning English.

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* Lightbown, P.M. 1983. "Core ESL in Quebec: What results can we expect?". *DIALOGUE: A Newsletter on the Teaching of English and French as Second Languages.* Vol. 2, No. 1, The Council of Ministers of Education: Canada, November 1983, pp. 1,4,5,6.

If it seems that the emphasis is on comprehension rather than production skills, then I've made myself clear. There are, I believe, good reasons for emphasizing comprehension.

- Francophone Quebecers as a group will have far more occasions to use comprehension than production skills in English throughout their lives.

- Students tend to be able to overcome shyness and tension much better when they know the focus is on the message rather than the form of their response.

- The use of authentic material for comprehension activities has significant motivational value because it is possible to draw on a wide variety of interesting topics – something which is very difficult to do when you must stick to materials which are written "in simple sentences with only the present tense of verbs." For francophones, the existence of a very large number of French/English cognates makes it possible to understand quite advanced vocabulary at a relatively early stage in language learning. Yet surprisingly little pedagogical use has been made of this fact.

- Because many ESL core courses in Quebec are taught by francophones whose own pronunciation and grammar are not native-like, an emphasis on comprehension makes it possible to provide students with native-speaker/native-writer models through tape recording and printed texts. If students are exposed to carefully selected samples of spoken and written language produced by native speakers, they will have more opportunities to see and hear correct standard (though not necessarily *formal*) language on which they can eventually model their own production of English.

- Finally, and in fact most important, emphasis on comprehension allows the ESL teacher to make available more "comprehension input" to serve as the data for language acquisition. I refer here, of course, to Krashen's hypothesis that what is necessary and sufficient for language acquisition is exposure to comprehensible input in the target language, language which is comprehensible, but slightly beyond the level of the learner's own ability at that particular point in time – in a context where the learner is positively motivated to hear and understand. Like many teachers and researchers in the area of language acquisition, I tend to have some quarrel with Krashen regarding the role of formal instruction for language acquisition. I hope it is clear that I am not recommending a return either to pages of grammar-translation exercises and memorized rules or to rigid pattern practice. What I do mean is instruction which focusses on formal features of the language through brief grammatical explanation and exercises, vocabulary lessons, descriptions of particular syntactic patterns in the language, etc. Krashen sees formal instruction *about* the language as largely irrelevant to the development of real competence in the language. My own view is reconciled with Krashen's, perhaps, in that I see formal instruction as contributing to *making input comprehensible*. Thus, while exposure to comprehensible input may indeed be a sufficient condition for second language acquisition, I believe that appropriate formal instruction may aid acquisition by providing the learner with more "hooks" – more points of access to the meaning. I agree with Krashen entirely, however, that interesting comprehensible input is a *necessary* condition for second language acquisition.

Thus, in the new ESL core programs in Quebec, the emphasis will be – as it should be – on comprehension, and production skills will be oriented toward the development of information-getting skills: students need experience in asking questions, requesting clarification, explaining what information they require.

Many people – teachers, parents, students – will agree that core ESL programs in Quebec have not, in the past, been as successful as one might wish in the development of either ESL skills or positive attitudes toward using and learning English. The emphasis on the production of letter-perfect forms – through both the grammar-translation and audio-lingual periods – meant that students proceeded very slowly: English classes often seemed tedious and repetitive to good students, intimidating and discouraging to weaker ones. The orientation of the new programs toward communication-based activities where meaning is considered first and the polishing of form second, and where the emphasis is on comprehension and the fostering of positive attitudes, is more in line with current views of language learning and teaching. We should not of course pretend ourselves that this educational reform will be a panacea. We all know of the many pitfalls which lie in wait of the best-laid plans of curriculum-designers. One which comes quickly to mind is the possibility that adequate funds for re-educating (not just re-training) teachers may not be available. But such issues must be addressed elsewhere. Meanwhile we may permit ourselves to be optimistic about the future of core ESL – while we are at the same time realistic about what we can expect.

ESL: Time to Teach*

Patsy M. Lightbown , Concordia University

Time is a factor which affects many aspects of language teaching. In this paper, I will focus on two time-related questions:
(1) What is the best time to teach ESL in Quebec schools?
(2) Is enough time devoted to ESL teaching?

What is the best time to teach? I don't mean "Is Tuesday at 9:00 better than Friday at 2:30?" We all know the answer to that question. I'm referring to the question of the age of the learner. What is the best time in terms of the learner's development of his or her own language or of his or her cognitive maturity? The answer to this one is somewhat less obvious than the answer to the question about the time of day.

It is a widely held opinion that the younger the learner, the better the learning when it comes to language. And yet, there are two kinds of information which lead us to question this simple generalization. First, there is some research which suggests that beginning the teaching and learning of a second language too soon can lead to deficits in the first language and possibly to cognitive and educational deficits as well.

If you are persuaded by that argument, you should closely examine closely the research literature on which it is based. You will find that any reputable study which has found deficits which seem to be related to too-early second language learning have been carried out in contexts of children from disadvantaged minority language groups learning majority languages in circumstances which entail the replacement of their native language by the second language. A child comes to school and finds that the language he or she knows already does not permit him or her to follow the academic program. In order to do that, he or she must learn the school language. Thus, while he or she is learning the school language, the learning that takes place through that language is somewhat restricted. Meanwhile, the language he or she does know, his or her home language, is used less and less as he or she spends many hours in school. If he or she is a member of a disadvantaged minority group, his or her parents may be unable to supplement his or her learning of math or social studies at home. There may be few books and few sources of information about the subject matter of school available in the minority language . Sometimes the parents are convinced that it is in the child's best interests to forget the native language, or at least to use it only in very restricted settings. They may be trying their best to use the school language "for the child's own good", thus depriving the child of a fully developed

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* This is a slightly revised version of the paper presented as the closing pleanary address at the 1985 SPEAQ Convention in Montreal.

linguistic system for interaction either with his or her parents or with the school. It is this type of second language learning, which Wallace Lambert called "substractive bilingualism", which may lead to genuine delays in cognitive and academic development. Note that this is not really an argument for beginning second language instruction later. It is an argument for mother tongue maintenance — at home, if not at school.

The circumstances I have just described are those in which research has been interpreted to show both linguistic and cognitive deficits in children whose second language learning is begun too soon. Such deficits due to an early start have not generally been observed in the case of so-called French immersion, the Canadian educational innovation in which anglophone children begin their schooling in a setting where the teacher speaks only French to a group of children who, at the beginning, speak only English. The differences between this situation and the situation of the minority language child described above should be quite obvious. The anglophone in North America does not need to worry about the loss of his or her native language. And if he or she comes from a middle class family — as most children in immersion do — it can be expected that he or she will have opportunities to develop English literacy skills at home. Furthermore, one should not overlook the fact that immersion schooling is bilingual *education. Not only are most immersion classes housed in English schools, but the instructional program also includes a substantial English language component.*

What you will not *find in the research literature is any evidence that second language instruction of the formal type — where the teacher spends 15, 30 or even 60 minutes a day giving instruction in a second language while the rest is spent in the child's native language — has any negative effect whatsoever on the child's cognitive development, his or her academic progress, or the development of his or her mother tongue.*

Until you have reviewed the research literature yourself, don't let anyone persuade you that one can start too early with second language instruction if, by starting too early, they mean that a couple of hours a week of second language instruction is somehow harmful to the learner. There may be good reasons for avoiding very early ESL instruction in Quebec schools, but this is not one of them: one or two hours of ESL instruction per week will not harm children.

The second type of research challenging the "younger is better" view is that which looks strictly at success in learning the second language itself. In research on this question, there is growing evidence that, in classroom instructional settings, older children and adults progress much more rapidly than younger children through the early stages of second language development. In fact, some research suggests that even in informal settings, where language is learned strictly though use of the language in communicative contexts, adults and older children progress more *rapidly than young children. However, the evidence further suggests that unlike adult learners, the children who begin learning before the age of puberty can master the target language fully and completely — if the child has opportunities to be exposed to speakers of the language in all types of settings, that is, if he or she has good models of the language.*

Age is not sufficient as a predictor. For example, children in French immersion programs rarely reach complete native-like mastery of the language, not because they didn't start early enough, but apparently because they do not have a sufficiently rich range of models — especially peers — on whom to base their own language development.

I would like to suggest that there may be good reasons not to introduce ESL instruction before grade 4 or even later in the schools of Quebec. But as long as we are talking about formal ESL instruction rather than some type of immersion, those reasons will be reasons of pedagogical economy, of efficiency and effectiveness rather than reasons of threat to the native language and cognitive development of the child. I believe that students may learn more *if we start later and* intensify *the instruction, rather than starting early and providing a very thin diet of one or two hours a week of instruction. Of course there are other factors which limit the application of this principle. Adolescents may be potentially successful, but poorly motivated. Maximum efficiency in a vacuum might be served by making secondary three a compulsory immersion year, but there may be other reasons to recommend against such a plan. This is not to say that biologically or psycholinguistically or cognitively fourteen-year olds are not at a good age. Take the same youngers and move them to Vancouver and they would learn English in a hurry. But in a classroom, with their peers, their social order is disturbed by what they perceive as having to embarrass themselves by having to speak English in the presence of their friends.*

To sum up this discussion of the best time *to teach in terms of the child's development: There is evidence that children who are surrounded by a second language while they are still very young can reach full native-like mastery of the language. In instructional settings, however, the evidence suggests that older children and adolescents are more efficient, especially in the early stages of second language learning.*

The second question to be addressed in this paper is that of total time for language instruction: Is enough time devoted to ESL teaching ?

How many minutes of instruction do ESL students in Quebec get each week ? The Ministry says it should be 120 minutes per week in grades 4, 5, and 6; 150 minutes in the secondary school. How many students actually get that many minutes ? In its inquiry leading to its recent report, the Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation explored in detail the current status of ESL teaching. In the report, the Conseil chose to refrain from recommending the implementation of experimental intensive or extended ESL programs, and recommended instead that priority be given to ensuring that the *currently mandated time allotments be implemented in the many school boards where less time was being scheduled — 100 minutes per week in some boards, 90 in others — even less in some. Even in schools where the full number of minutes is allotted, the fact that students or teachers often have to move from one classroom to another or retrieve books from cupboards or lockers often means that many minutes are lost. And of course, we're all familiar with the losses due to special events, announcements on the school public address loudspeakers, interruptions to distribute milk or fluoride treatments. It's probably accurate to say that there are few, if any, weeks in which all the scheduled minutes are actually devoted to teaching ESL.*

Sometimes, in my courses at Concordia, I ask students what they consider to be the most serious impediment to successful ESL teaching. They almost always start by saying motivation and then we go on to brainstorm lots of other things. It surprises me that they hardly ever mention what seems to me to be the one thing which guarantees that classroom achievement in the second language will be limited: too little time. Too little time to hear the language; too few chances to try to use words or phrases students have heard. Too little time for the teacher to interact with each student; too little time for the teacher to find out who is still having trouble understanding and who is already bored.

It's interesting to calculate how much time it takes to learn a language. At various times I've calculated that the average child has had some 15,000 hours of exposure to his or her own native language by the time he or she starts school. And that's a very conservative estimate. Children who are enrolled in French immersion programs which start in kindergarten, use only French for instruction in grades 1 and 2, then gradually introduce English in grades 3, 4 and 5, will have had more than 3,000 hours of exposure to French before they enter grade 6. In Quebec, a student whose school devotes the maximum recommended time to ESL, from grade 4 right through secondary, would get about 700 hours — including the fluoride treatments !

I'm certainly not alone nor the first to call attention to the problem of too little time to teach. For example, there is an article by Merrill Swain in a 1981 issue of Language Learning *called Time and Timing in Bilingual Education. Her primary concern in that article is with bilingual education — particularly with comparisons between voluntary French immersion for Canadian anglophones and imposed second language learning for immigrant and minority group children — the latter being the kind of educational experience referred to earlier as subtractive bilingualism. However, Swain also quotes from a number of studies and statements regarding the role of time in instructional second language programs, programs which do not lead to bilingual education or education through the target language, but rather aim at basic (communicative) competence in the target language. Some of those quotations are worth repeating.*

For example, in 1975, John Carroll, reporting on a huge international investigation of second language teaching of French in eight countries concluded that the data of the ... study suggest that the primary factor in the attainment of proficiency in French ... is the amount of instructional time provided (p. 276 — quoted by Swain 1981, p.2).

Similarly, from a 1977 document from the Ontario Ministry of Education, Swain quotes the following.

> Organizationally, it is considered that the key factor is the number of hours of instruction in French, or in subjects using French as the language of communication. In other words, the more hours a pupil spends in French, the higher (the) level of achievement is likely to be.

The document further sets out funding guidelines for Ontario schools.

> The new grant plan is based on the idea that the more instructional time a pupil received in French, the greater the likelihood of achieving a facility with the language. Generally speaking, the more hours of French instruction accumulated by a pupil through his or her school board (pp. 8 & 11 of document, quoted by Swain 1981, p. 3).

Swain then discusses the research in French immersion education which shows that there are probably limits to the notion that if more hours are good, lots more hours will be even better, regardless of how the hours are used or distributed. Recent research by Swain and her colleagues in Ontario, by Fred Genesee and his colleagues in Montreal, as well as others, has tended to show that late immersion students who began their immersion program in grade 7 at age 12 had, in terms of many test scores, proficiency in French at the end of grade 8 which was similar to the proficiency of a comparison group in grade 8 who had been in French immersion from kindergarten. The early immersion pupils had accumulated 4,000 hours of exposure to French; those from the late immersion program had accumulated 1,400 hours. And yet the learners who had started later and had only one-third as many hours, equalled or surpassed the early immersion students on several measures. The early immersion students were superior only on the listening comprehension test.

These results from French immersion reinforce the discussion in the first part of the paper, suggesting that older learners may develop more rapidly at the early stages of second language learning. As mentioned above, it should be noted that the one advantage which most researchers attribute to younger learners, namely, the long-term ability to develop native-like mastery including native-like pronunciation, does not accrue to children in immersion — presumably because they do not have sufficient contact with native speakers of the target language, especially peers with whom to speak the language in a variety of non-instructional settings.

I do not believe the immersion results I've just described represent an iron-clad case for late immersion as superior to early immersion.There are reasons beyond test results which may make early immersion preferable. The point is simply that accumulated hours cannot suffice as an accurate predictor of language mastery when total exposure is very great. The results also suggest that intensive contact with the language may be more effective than that which is spread out over many years in smaller quantities.

Of course, in Quebec — particularly in the public school system — we are very far indeed from overdosing our students with ESL ! Our problem clearly lies at the other end of the scale: very limited time to teach. What should we do about that ? I'd like to suggest two responses: (1) make the best use of the time you have and (2) try to get more time — and make the best use of that time as well.

What do I mean by make the best use of the time you have to teach ESL? You should perhaps begin by acknowledging that your objective cannot be to develop balanced bilinguals whose second language skills are equivalent to their first language skills. Your reasonable objective has to be to prepare students to benefit from opportunities to use the language outside of class. This is true whatever the program you are teaching in. Even if you are teaching in a program for adults who also get considerable exposure to the language outside the classroom, there is evidence that teaching programs can be effective in helping learners increase their proficiency (see Mike Long's article in the TESOL Quarterly in 1983). They do this in part by helping learners to make better use of their out-of-class exposure.

Whatever kind of program we're in — elementary or secondary school, regular or intensive programs, adult education, CEGEP programs, university ESL— our long-term objective is usually to prepare students to use the language they're learning when they encounter it outside the classroom. More and more, course objectives are no longer written in terms of the mastery of the past perfect at the end of level 6, but rather in terms of what students are expected to be able to use the language for. But our desire to have students prepared to use the language outside the classroom goes beyond our perfectly reasonable concern that they see the language as a means to a functional or communicative end such as ordering food in a restaurant or asking for directions. These communicative ends turn out to be means to another end, namely more language learning. Using the language outside the classroom walls provides more input, more opportunity to practise, real-world motivation.

For those who are teaching in areas remote from English-speaking populations: don't think I'm not talking about your students. Outside the classroom includes watching television; reading English comics, newspapers, or books; English while on vacation; pen-pals; and opportunities for exchange programs. Communicative use of English shouldn't be understood as referring only to face-to-face conversations. It can include face to book — or face to TV screen ! But these things don't just happen. Students can only benefit (in terms of language learning) from watching television, for example, if they have reached a fairly high level of proficiency or if they have been well prepared to watch with a purpose. Exchange programs require great effort and planning, but the payoff is worth it, as Denise Lussier and her colleagues and the SEVEC program have convincingly shown.

All these remarks about out-of-class activities may make you think I've forgotten that my question here was: How do we make the best use of our time to teach? But I haven't forgotten. What I'm saying is, we make the best use of our class time when we prepare students to continue learning outside the classroom. In a sense, that was one of the most serious problems with the lock-step audio-lingual programs. Teachers — and eventually students — were convinced that they had to proceed through the language in a straight line, that any deviation would interfere withthe goal of the program. For this reason, students were not encouraged to try to use the language outside the class and students who knew the language better than others because they had had previous experience with the language were often considered to be problems — disrupting the step-by-step progress toward mastery.

Our current understanding of language acquisition suggests that the principles of such lock-step learning were based on an idealized view of language learning which does not correspond to reality. Over the past few years, a number of researchers have shown that Corder's hypothesis that learners have a built-in syllabus has some considerable validity. Don't misunderstand me — I'm not saying that we know what that built-in syllabus is or that, knowing it, we could in very precise ways hurry learners along it by teaching specifically according to this syllabus. What I want to emphasize is that making the best use fo class time means teaching the learner to use out-of-class opportunities and giving him or her experiences in class which build his or her confidence in his or her ability to use the language outside.

I said I had two responses to the problem of having too little time to teach. The first — making the best use of the time you have — is the one which probably fits best with most teachers, most classes and schools. But I'd like to make a few remarks about the other response: try to get more time and make the best use of that time as well. I'd like to focus on the situation in Quebec schools. Outside this context, the question of more time is at least partly at the discretion of students, who can take a longer or more intensive course — as long as they are willing or able to pay the extra fees, or take the time off from work. School students don't have that choice.

Several school boards have taken the initiative in getting more time to teach ESL. The fine panel discussion on alternatives to the drip-feed approach* included presentations of a variety of alternatives which are being implemented in a number of school boards. In some cases, the total time is actually being increased very little, but it is being rearranged — sometimes dramatically, as when all ESL instruction is compressed into an intensive five-month period in grade 6; sometimes only moderately, as when grade 4 instruction is eliminated in order to increase the amount of instructional time offered in grades 5 and 6. So far, there has not been too much in

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*: This panel discussion was organised for SPEAQ 1985 by Palmer Acheson of the TESL Centre at Concordia University. Presentations were made by Iolanda Bolduc (Greenfield Park School Commission), Ghislaine Côté-Provost (Jacques Cartier School Commissiòn), Francine Hunt (Mille Isles School Commission), and Hans Tibblin (Baldwin Cartier School Commission).

the way of formal evaluation of these programs. But observation of some of the classes, as well as discussions with parents, students and teachers, suggests that the level of satisfaction is very high. A number of additional school boards are looking at the possibility of similar programs for next year. One result which is clear from these programs — even the most intensive — is that they have not taken anything away from the ESL learners' academic development in the other subject matter.

Another way to get more time is to persuade the educational authorities that teaching some subject matter courses through the medium of English could be very effective. One may agree that courses such as Canadian history or Quebec history are best taught through French. But some courses seem particularly well suited to second language medium instruction — physical education, art, even math or science for a year or two. This approach has been very successful in the so-called extended French programs in English schools, particularly in other provinces, and the fact that it is not currently acceptable for ESL teaching in Quebec does not mean that we should forget about it. It has much to recommend it — especially for secondary level. Note that there is no evidence that such a procedure threatens the child's overall academic achievement.

Last year at the congress of the International Association of Applied Linguistics in Brussels, I heard a fascinating paper by Alan Davies from the University of Edinburgh. When Professor Davies was in Canada earlier this year, I asked him to present some of the same information at Concordia. The paper was a report on research he and his colleagues had carried out in Nepal. They had been invited to Nepal to look into the possibility of beginning English language instruction in Nepali schools in grade one rather than in grade 5 as is the current practice. Many parents and some educators felt that this would lead to better English language achievement. The investigation revealed, however, that there were simply not enough trained teachers with good English language skills to make such and early start feasible — much less desirable. In fact, the research team concluded that the very best course, from the point of view of efficiency and pedagogical effectiveness, would be to delay English teaching until early secondary school, thereby permitting the Ministry of Education to use fully qualified English teachers for all classes rather than having most classes taught by poorly trained or low proficiency teachers. However, such a proposal would have been unacceptable to parents and educational authorities for political reasons. Thus, the final recommendation was to continue to introduce English instruction in late elementary classes — a compromise which at least prevented what would clearly have been a very poor use of pedagogical resources — and students' and teachers' time.

We are far removed, both geographically and culturally, from Nepal. But I think there are parallels to be drawn with the Quebec context. Spreading out ESL teaching over the years in small doses, often administered by teachers who are not prepared to teach ESL and who would prefer to be doing something else, is likely to be less *effective than concentrating the teaching in larger blocks of time where it can be taught by teachers with the background and the inclination for teaching English.*

To conclude, what I have tried to emphasize is that we simply do not have enough time allotted to ESL teaching in Quebec, and that our response to that should be (1) to make the best use of the time we have by preparing students to benefit from out-of-class experiences, and (2) to try to get more time — not by starting earlier, say in grade 3 or 2 or 1, but by intensifying instruction in the later years.

Of course time is not enough. Poor teaching done twice as long may achieve results no different from those achieved in less time. Time is not enough, but enough time is an essential component of successful second language teaching and learning.

If you would like a bibliography of works referred to in this paper as well as other articles related to the question of time and second language teaching, please write to the author: P. M. Lightbown, Director, TESL Centre, 1455 de Maisonneuve West, Montreal, H3G 1M8.

Research in Second Language Acquisition: What Can Teachers Use?

Twenty years ago I was a teacher of French as a foreign language in an American high school I had just received a masters degree in teaching French from a prestigious university where I had studied French literature, language and culture and had been trained by a well-known expert in foreign language teaching to teach according to what was then confidently referred to as the scientific approach. My training had been thorough and I had been a conscientious student so that by the time I faced my first class I could lead pattern practice and substitution drills with military precision. I knew how to avoid letting any student hear anything that didn't fit the orderly progression of vocabulary and structures to be learned. I could avoid situations in which they might attempt to say anything that had not been carefully presented and practised. I corrected every error and had students repeat the correct sentence several times to erase any potentially habit-forming experiences with anything other than perfect complete sentences.

I had learned all manner of mimicry so that, except for a global translation of the introductory dialogue in each unit, I could give students some understanding of what they were saying without ever using a word of their native language — which was also mine. I filled my classroom with posters of Mont St-Michel and Notre-Dame de Paris and baked a bûche de Noël at Christmas. I worked very hard and can remember being so tired that I would put my head on my desk at the end of the day and fall asleep. In the eyes of my department chairman I was a great success. And there's no doubt I was doing what I'd been taught to do, but I was filled with doubts about the effectiveness or even the appropriateness of what I was doing.

I was a young and idealistic teacher. In the 1960s that meant, among other things, that I had a very well-developed sense of social responsibility and a conviction that the kids from disadvantaged backgrounds had as much right to educational opportunities as those from more favored backgrounds. I did have the opportunity to teach one class — on an experimental basis — of kids who had not performed well in their previous academic work. Interestingly, it was considered inappropriate for me to use with them the same materials I used with the more academically successful students. (For those familiar with the best-known materials for foreign language teaching at that time, it was suggested that, instead of the audio lingual materials I was using with my academic students, I should use Voix et images de France. *The essential difference was that the A - L materials consisted of books with page after page of dialogues, pattern practice, and drills, while the* Voix et images *materials used pictures — filmstrips — to illustrate the dialogues.*

Paper presented as the opening keynote address for TESL Nova Scotia, Halifax, May 22, 1987.

Meanwhile, I was aware that in another part of the huge city school where I was teaching, another teacher had something called an ESL class in which she was working with immigrant and minority group kids. Clearly, these kids were expected to learn English — and pretty quick at that — so that they could get on with their education. Why, I wondered, was it assumed that these kids who, no doubt, came from all sorts of backgrounds — mostly disadvantaged — and had a wide variety of intellectual ability and academic experience, were believed able to learn English when my one class of non-academic students had been so hard to get and, I feared by now, probably weren't going to learn much French after all.

On the other hand, I had also begun to worry about my academic students. I felt frustrated because — again, young and idealistic — I wanted to get to know them and I wanted them to like me and see me as a friend, someone they could feel at ease with. But that was hard when, during class time, our interactions were controlled by the necessity of practicing what Steve Krashen later referred to as the structure of the day. If the structure of the day was negative sentences, then the students had to forget the early-morning line-up outside the family bathroom when I asked if they had brothers or sisters. The correct answer in that case was only Je n'ai pas de frères or Je n'ai pas de soeurs .

I think the final blow to my confidence in my teaching method came one afternoon following a class in which the structure of the day had required students to answer my textbook questions about their hypothetical fathers, hypothetical professions. In this case the correct answers included Il est avocat or Mon père est professeur, etc. After school, one very sweet 14-year-old boy came to ask me if it were possible in tomorrow's class to avoid asking his friend Carl to answer that question because, well, Carl's father had died last summer and it was difficult for him and ... It did no good for me to tell myself that those sentences, those questions and answers were just practice, that the really important thing was that, in French, we don't use an indefinite article in a copular sentence identifying someone's profession. I knew that what really mattered was that language form in an isolated classroom context, people's real lives were ever present and couldn't be suspended for the 45-minute period of my French class.

> *If I had stayed on in that high school, I think I would have changed my way of teaching, and it is clear that the communicative approach to language teaching which began in the 1970s to erode the dominance of the audio lingual approach would have helped me to cope with my feelings about teaching meaningful language rather than language form. My career path took a different turn, but that experience of teaching according to the scientific approach left a lasting impression: that teachers must never let themselves be persuaded by a scientific approach which is incompatible with their experience and intuition. Don't misunderstand. I am not saying that teachers should not listen to researchers or that they would allow themselves to get into a rut of doing things this way or that simply because they did it that way last year or*

because they've already got ditto masters with all those exercises on them. What I would say instead is that teachers should listen to new ideas based on research or new teaching approaches, seek to understand their general significance for them and their students, give the new ideas a fair trial, and then make a reasoned decision about how they will work in their own individual situations.

If you will forgive me for returning for a few minutes to what was beginning to sound like my autobiography, I would like to say a bit more about how I have come to this conviction. When I left that city high school, I decided I should teach ESL to immigrant and minority students rather than to continue teaching French to an academic elite, feeling that I needed to do something really important and I was sure that the need for these kids to learn English was indeed crucial to their economic survival. Because I couldn't get a teaching job right away when I moved from one city to another, I began taking graduate courses again at Columbia University Teachers college, thinking of preparing to move into ESL teaching. In one of my courses that year, Professor Lois Bloom gave a lecture on children's language acquisition. During that lecture, it became clear to me that my scientific approach to language teaching was based on a theory of how languages are learned that had been strongly challenged in research on child language. At that time, there was not yet a research area known as second language acquisition research, but I knew after I heard that lecture that it was absolutely essential for me to know more about how languages are learned before I was ready to venture out again to try to teach a language. Thus began several years of research in child language—first language acquisition. And, during that same period, the field of second language acquisition research developed very rapidly. When I began teaching a course called Language Acquisition in a teacher training program for ESL teachers at Concordia University in 1974, I was sure that the courses I taught would open the eyes of the teachers and future teachers who were my students to such obvious truths as errors are a natural part of language learning and as such should not cause alarm and imitation and practice are not the cornerstones of language acquisition and not all errors in L2 learners' speech are caused by L1 interference or there are developmental stages in L2 acquisition. My students were polite and some were even fascinated by the things they learned about how children learn their native language and how Spanish-speaking children and adults in Los Angeles and New York learned English as a second language. But most of my students taught or planned to teach francophone adolescents in Quebec, students who had little contact with English outside school. They were sure that what I was telling them had little to do with that.

My response to that was to undertake a research project in Québec schools which enabled me to compare the language acquisition of these learners with that of learners from other language backgrounds and other learning situations and to observe that many of the same processes seemed to be operating in all types of language acquisition.

In the past few years I have drawn together results from my own research and that of others in a couple of articles and I would like to summarize the main point of those articles briefly.

In the first, titled Great Expectations: Second Language Acquisition Research and Classroom Teaching (and sub-titled by a friend What the Dickens does second language research have to do with second language teaching ?), I listed ten generalizations which I considered to have been supported by SLA research over the past twenty years and which appear to me to have significance for second language teachers. Perhaps some of you have read that article in Applied Linguistics, but I'd like to review those generalizations and comment on what I think they mean for ESL teachers.

1. **Adults and adolescents can acquire a second language**

In making the distinction between acquisition and learning Krashen challenged the way some people thought of post-puberty second language learners. There is a great deal of research on how age affects success in language learning. The point here is simply that, while older learners have developed much knowledge and many skills which younger ones do not have, they have not lost the most remarkable of children's capacities: the ability to discover the underlying structure of an unknown language through opportunities to use that language in meaningful communication — even in the absence of an instructional program which breaks it down for them into learnable chunks. What adults have that children don't have — or can use much less effectively — is the ability to learn language, that is, to effortfully and intentionally study the language — its rules, its systems, its word formation patterns. It is crucial to be aware of two points in this area, however. First, not all adults are able to use this metalinguistic ability very well. There are dramatic differences in aptitude for this kind of language learning and those without formal knowledge of their own language can benefit little from formal — metalinguistic — instruction in their second language. And second, there remains an important controversy regarding how the formal or learned knowledge is related to the informal or acquired knowledge. And this leads to another observation.

2. **Knowing a language rule does not mean one will be able to use it in interactive communication**

What I find most fascinating about this is the fact that the easiest rules to learn — the ones that are neatly-packaged simple statements that we teachers love — are sometimes quite difficult to acquire, that is, to integrate into spontaneous language use. An example I'm especially fond of is the English noun possessive. For French-speaking learners of English, this form is missing in both the speech and writing of even quite advanced learners. And yet, many of them are quite capable of stating the rule which they may have learned years earlier.

The other side of this generalization, of course, is that the fact that on uses a language rule correctly does not mean that one will be able to state it. This is the case for most of us in our first language.

We know very little about how we discover or internalize the rules of our native language or of a second language, but there is enough evidence about one myth now that permits me to make a third generalization drawn from language acquisition research.

3. Practice does not make perfect

I must quickly explain what I mean by practice. It is clear that I would include all those miserable drills I did with my high school students of French twenty years ago. But it is not only that. Even in the most natural type of language acquisition — children's first language development — this phenomenon exists. It's so well-documented now that there is a bit of jargon to refer to it. It's called U-shaped development. The name comes from what a line graph tracing the learner's accuracy on a particular structure might look like. For a certain period, accuracy is high. Then, sometimes very suddenly, it drops off dramatically. After a period of low accuracy on this form, accuracy returns to a high level again — often just as suddenly, but sometimes very gradually. What this usually means is that, having practised or used the structure in a limited number of contexts, the learner encounters and begins to acquire a related structure. The integration of the related structure interferes with the correct performance on the structure the learner previously used. A good example of this is the period when learners are mastering the subject-auxiliary inversion in English questions. Learners who had been producing correct sentences with embedded clauses, e.g., I don't know how they can do that begin producing sentences like I don't know how can they do that. Gradually the correct form will be reestablished as the relationship between question forms and embedded sentences is discovered.

The reason for this U-shaped development phenomenon is simply that language is a complex hierarchical entity and, contrary to the scientific approach by which I was trained to teach, it is not possible to teach it in a linear, cumulative manner, assuming that each newly learned structure can simply be added on to the ones learned before. Related to this are the next two generalizations.

4. The learner creates a systematic interlanguage which is often characterized by the same systematic errors as those made by a child learning the same language as the first language. Learners also make errors which appear to be based on the transfer of rules of expectations from their first language.

5. There are predictable sequences in acquisition such that certain structures have to be acquired before others can be integrated.

What these generalizations mean is that second language learners cannot acquire what they are not ready to acquire even though they may be able to learn certain structures and use them in a limited number of appropriate contexts. Twenty years ago Corder hypothesized that learners had a built-in syllabus. He further hypothesized that the input which learners received — in the classroom or elsewhere — would be filtered through this internal mechanism which would determine the intake, that is, what learners were actually able to incorporate and use in their developing interlanguage systems.

One of the most controversial issues in this area is the role of the learner's first language in determining the interlanguage system in general and sequences of acquisition in particular. Fortunately, second language acquisition research has moved beyond the debates of a few years ago in which theorists argued either that L1 influence explained almost every aspect of L2 learners' behavior or that L1 influence explained nothing, to a more balanced position in which the influence of L1 is investigated rather than assumed. The results of recent research show that L1 influence is systematic and, to some extent, predictable according to the structural relationships between the L1 and L2.

The power of learners' systematic interlanguage and the existence of apparently inalterable acquisition sequences leads naturally to the next generalization.

6. Isolated explicit error correction is usually ineffective in changing language behavior

Over the years of observing second language classrooms, I've become grateful that this is so. Error correction in classrooms is astonishingly poor. Teachers think a learner is saying one thing when he or she means another, so the correction offered does not actually apply to the learner's intended utterance. Furthermore, if allowed to speak somewhat freely, as learners in communicative classrooms now do, learners make so many errors that the teacher could never catch them all without constantly stopping the interaction and exchange of messages. In any case, it must be remembered that errors may represent a lack of attention — in which case the correction is irrelevant as it tells the learner what he or she already knows. On the other hand, errors may represent an underlying system, in which case the system will require a restructuring, something which will take more time and more exposure than the unreliable occasional specific explicit error corrections can offer.

Of course, this restructuring may never occur, and this leads to the next generalization.

7. For most adult learner, acquisition stops — fossilizes — before the learner has achieved native-like mastery of the target language

The reasons for this may well be neurological. Adults may simply be unable to go beyond a certain level of mastery. On the other hand, some observers argue that the reasons are more socio-affective: adults reach a level at which they are able to communicate successfully and, as they do not feel the need or desire to become indistinguishable members of the target language community, they simply stop developing. What is curious and complicated, however, is the fact that certain aspects of the target language system seem more subject to fossilization than others and that some learners go so much further toward the target language than others. Nevertheless, once this fossilization occurs, continued exposure to the language does not seem to penetrate the learner's system and further instruction may lead to more knowledge about the language without changing the patterns in the learner's communicative language use.

With regard to fossilization, an interesting area for future research is the case of children who, in spite of their age and in spite of intensive and extensive exposure to the second language, still fail to reach native-like mastery of the language. This incomplete mastery is regularly observed in children in French immersion programs, where a number of explanations may be offered: students may reinforce each others' errors; personal and group identity of these majority language children may make them choose — at some level of consciousness — to maintain their distinctive non-native interlanguage; the fact that their imperfect language is always understood and accepted by peers and teachers may remove any incentive to change.

More puzzling is the immigrant or minority child who, in spite of long exposure and a clear desire to be accepted by the majority group, remains unable to master the second language. The pervailing mythology about children's magical abilities to acquire a second language rapidly and perfectly has tended to obscure these children. Jim Cummins of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education has argued that it takes some children several years (he says 5 to 7) to reach age-appropriate command of the target language in settings requiring both linguistic and cognitive sophistication. There may also be children, however, whose target language difficulties mask the fact that they also have some difficulty in their native language development. The absence of adequate tools for assessing immigrant and minority children's abilities in their L1 represents a serious impediment to our understanding and helping the unsuccessful child L2 learner.

Even for the most gifted second language learner, there is another generalization related to this.

8. One cannot achieve native-like (or near native-like) command of a second language in one hour a day

For those who teach in a foreign language situation where contact with the language occurs only in brief class periods of formal instruction, this is all too obvious. It takes thousands of hours — even under the best conditions — to learn a language. Where *learners' contact with the language is limited or where the contact is with language at too great a level of difficulty, development will be very slow.*

Two more generalizations remain on my list.

9. A learner's ability to understand language in a meaningful context exceeds his/her ability to comprehend decontextualized language and to produce language of comparable complexity and accuracy

It's essential to underscore the importance of context in saying that learners understand more than they can produce. Research to date has not revealed how comprehension and production are related at the level of syntax and morphology. The fact that a learner understands complex language in a particular situation does not mean he or she would understand the same sentences in a different situation or even in the same context if there were time pressure, ambient noise, or the necessity to attend to some other information at the same time.

Finally, the last generalization.

10. The learner's task is enormous because language is enormously complex.

What we must always remember is that we could never teach learners everything they need to know about the language they are learning. To speak and understand a language at a native-or near native-speaker level, one must have unconscious knowledge of rules not made explicit in the most thorough linguistic analyses of the language, much less in a second language textbook.

When we think of our responsibility as language teachers we must keep in mind that, as John Macnamara said in an article first published twenty years ago, The extent to which we cannot formulate a language is the extent to which our learning of it cannot be formal, and this is to a very great extent. (Macnamara, 1973, p. 61)

The title of this talk is Second Language Acquisition Research: What Can Teachers Use? I began by suggesting that teachers had good reason to be sceptical of a so-called scientific approach; and yet I went on to say that I had gotten involved in second language acquisition research because I believed it was important to know more about how languages are learned if one intends to find better ways to teach languages.

It's fair, I think, to point out that the scientific approach for which I was trained in the 1960s was based on the psychological theory of behaviorism, the linguistic theory of structuralism, and considerable experience with this teaching approach with small groups of highly motivated military, diplomatic, and intelligence personnel in intensive (6 to 8-hour a day) programs in residential schools. In other words, that *particular scientific approach was not based on second language acquisition research at all and certainly had no basis in what I would call ordinary language teaching contexts. What is the relationship between recent research and second language teaching? What do the generalizations just outlined mean for teachers?*

In a paper which appeared in the special issue of TESL Canada Journal, *I suggested that recent research is consistent with five roles for the second language teacher.*

(1) Teachers should provide learners with comprehensible input from their own speech as well as from other learners and from written materials and recorded material.

Those of you familiar with Steve Krashen's theory of second language acquisition know that, in Krashen's view, this is all *learners need. Although this comprehensible input hypotheses is by no means as simplistic as some critics suggest, I believe that the current state of research shows only that exposure to comprehensible input is necessary. Research has not — at least not yet — supported his hypotheses that it is sufficient. Nevertheless, supplying comprehensible input in an environment in which learners are motivated to pay attention to the content of what they hear or read is the teacher's first responsibility. If this requirement is not met, nothing else the teacher does will compensate for its absence, but the next role of the teacher is very closely related and virtually as important as the first.*

(2) Teachers should prepare learners, through the selection of appropriate tasks, to cope with the language outside the classroom.

This implies that at least some of the language which learners encounter in the classroom should be authentic language. But this is not inconsistent with the provision of comprehensible input. Language can be made comprehensible to learners either by simplification of the language addressed to them, or by contextualization of the language, or by the provision of strategies which learners can use to break through complex language and discover what they do understand. This gives learners the experience of coping with difficult language and strategies for coping which, in turn, give them the confidence to try to use and understand the language outside the classroom, thus increasing their opportunities for more comprehensible input. The teacher's third role follows directly from this.

(3) Teachers should provide access to reference and resource materials so students can find their own answers to questions about how to say something, what something means, how to spell something or, even, what the grammatical rule for something is.

And students should learn, through experience, how to use such materials. Obviously, this adds to the learners' independence and, once again, expands comprehensible input.

(4) Teachers should provide focussed instruction on some areas of recurring difficulty in language or language use. These areas may be identified through the teacher's own observation or pedagogical intuitions or through familiarity with SLA research, contrastive analysis, or linguistic descriptions of the target language.

Having provided such instruction, however, the teacher should not require or even expect that learners will begin to use what they have been taught in spontaneous speech. What the instruction can provide is very much like what the dictionaries and reference books provide — points of reference the learner can call on when there's time and motivation to do so. At a certain point in the learner's development, these points of reference can provide precisely the required input to push the learner's language forward. And some so-called good language learners are able to call on this kind of knowledge quite successfully even in communicative settings.

(5) Teachers should provide negative feedback and correction

(a) when learners request it,
(b) when an error is persistent and the learner seems not to realize this,
or
(c) when the teacher knows — from his or her own experience or familiarity with research — that the particular error is one which is often fossilized by learners with this background.

For this one I have a confession to make: As far as I know there is no research evidence to support the usefulness of such corrective feedback. In fact, in the most successful contexts for language learning, we know that there is little such feedback: (1) in child language, parents correct children for content not form; (2) outside classrooms, learners rarely receive corrective feedback; (3) in immersion classes, teachers correct a very small percentage of errors in form, but do tend to correct errors in content. Furthermore, as we have said, systematic errors represent an underlying system which will change only when the system is restructured; and some errors are fossilized and appear impervious to change except under a limited set of focus on form conditions.

Nevertheless, those of you who work with adults know that many of them find communicative approaches to second language teaching frustrating because they believe that correction will help and that the teacher who never corrects is not doing his or her job. Thus, providing feedback is partly a matter of maintaining one's credibility as a teacher. Another reason for providing feedback of a type not available to non-instructed learners is that those best contexts for L2 acquisition are also contexts where learners receive thousands of hours of contact with the language.

What is important is to limit correction to those errors which are within the limits of a learner's current level of language development. It makes no sense to correct errors in inflectional morphemes if basic syntax has not been established.

What all this comes down to is this: second language learners are ultimately responsible for their own learning. Current research makes it clear that the learner has far more to learn than the teacher can teach and that certain developmental patterns of learning are not affected by teaching practice. The most dramatic evidence for this has been offered by Manfred Pienemann, based on his research on the learning of German as a foreign language. What teachers provide is opportunities, strategies, feedback, some rules of thumb and lots of encouragement. But unless the learner develops an independent motivation and expands this learning beyond the classroom, second language acquisition will remain incomplete.

Second language acquisition research: What can teachers use? Perhaps they can use the reassurance that comes from knowing that if they are leading their students toward independence in language learning, they're doing something right.

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Great Expectations: Second-Language Acquisition Research and Classroom Teaching

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The title of this article[1] may suggest a certain scepticism about the potential for applying second-language acquisition research findings to classroom teaching.[2] In fact, I am convinced that second-language research does have much to contribute to teaching practice in the long run. However, I believe that at present its contribution lies not so much in what it has to say regarding the development of syllabus content or specific teaching methods as in what it has to say regarding the development of expectations on the part of teachers for what they and their students can accomplish. Thus my title refers to two kinds of 'expectations': (1) the expectations of both teachers and researchers that second-language acquisition research findings will have implications for *what* to teach and *how* to teach; (2) teachers' expectations of themselves and of their language-learning students.

In this article I will very briefly review the kind of research which has been and is being carried out in second-language acquisition. I will then outline what I consider to be some of the most widely agreed-upon generalizations which can be drawn from the research to date. Finally, I will discuss the ways in which I think it is appropriate to apply these generalizations to second-language teaching.

1. SECOND-LANGUAGE ACQUISITION RESEARCH: A BRIEF REVIEW

The term 'second-language acquisition research' refers to studies which are designed to investigate questions about learners' use of their second language and the processes which underlie second-language acquisition and use. The field of research is new—less than twenty years old if we leave out work done in the 1950s and 1960s in what might be called 'preventive contrastive analysis'. Most people in the field identify two significant papers which mark the beginning: Corder's 1967 paper 'The significance of learners' errors' and Selinker's 1972 paper which, in its title, gave a name to the object of investigation, 'Interlanguage'.

Since the early 1970s, second-language acquisition research has been carried out within a number of different theoretical frameworks and has made use of a number of different research methods. In a 1977 review article, Hakuta and Cancino summarized second-language acquisition research carried out within four main approaches: contrastive analysis, error analysis, performance analysis, and discourse analysis. Hakuta and Cancino treated these almost as a 'trial and error' series, with each new approach improving on and largely replacing the one which preceded it. With a few more years of hindsight, it seems that all four approaches continue to be important to the field. Each one complements the others, rather than replacing them. In addition to these four, and interacting with them, are several approaches to second-language acquisition research which have been developed in the past few years. For example, a number of recent studies are based on a sociolinguistic approach, and there has been a great increase in the number of

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studies undertaken within a theoretical linguistics framework. More and more researchers are attempting to go beyond the description of what learners *do* to an understanding of what learners *know* and *how* they come to know it.

There are many ways of grouping or classifying second-language studies. For this paper, I have arranged them in three broad categories principally based on methodological differences: (1) descriptive studies, (2) hypothesis-testing studies, and (3) experimental pedagogical studies. I will briefly describe and give a few examples of each of these categories.[3]

1.1 *Descriptive studies*

Some researchers have begun their research by collecting samples of so-called 'natural' or 'spontaneous' speech or writing from one or from a number of second-language learners. Some of the samples are based on truly natural language (e.g. Hakuta 1974), while others have used elicitation procedures which induce the learner to talk, but shape in some way the range of possible topics or contexts for certain linguistic forms (e.g. Dulay and Burt 1974). Some studies are longitudinal, following a learner or group of learners over a period of time (e.g. Lightbown 1980). Others are cross-sectional, examining a group or groups of learners at a single point in time, or the performance of learners assumed to have different levels of target language proficiency (e.g. Bailey, Madden, and Krashen 1974).

Once the data have been gathered, the work of description begins. Sometimes the descriptions of learners' language performance are compared to the target language, and sometimes described in terms of internal consistencies which may not match the patterns of the target language. (See Bloom 1974a for a similar distinction in first-language acquisition research.) An example of the target language-based studies would be the morpheme acquisition studies by Dulay and Burt (1974) and others, in which the relative extent of correct use of certain grammatical forms in obligatory contexts has been used as the basis for inferring an acquisition sequence for these forms. Studies which seek internal consistencies in learner language without regard to target language norms are those such as Huebner's (1979) study of the patterns of use of the English article by a Hmong speaker. Huebner found that this second-language learner's use of the article appeared to be powerfully affected by his mistaken assumption that English, like his native language, uses what might be called pragmatic rather than syntactic rules for the marking of definiteness.

What all these studies have in common is that they start from what we might call 'very raw' data, describe the consistencies and variations, and then seek to interpret or account for them. There is a vast literature based on research of this kind, and the interpretations of the data have included sociolinguistic (Schumann 1978, Meisel, Clahsen, and Pienemann 1981), psycholinguistic (Schachter 1974), instructional (Lightbown 1982), personality (Fillmore 1976) and other factors. And, although I have given examples of studies which focused on language form as such, researchers have also investigated the evolution of the learner's expression of categories of meaning such as location and time relations (Meisel 1982). One might also include in this category the 'foreigner talk' or 'input' studies which describe the language which learners hear and the kinds of interactions they engage in (Long 1981).

1.2 *Hypothesis-testing studies*

A second approach to second-language acquisition research is one which, rather than starting from 'natural' language samples, starts from some specific hypotheses about learners' language knowledge and seeks to test them, using procedures such as comprehension tasks, judgements of grammaticality, or translation.[4] Some of the hypotheses have been drawn from descriptive studies; others from theoretical frameworks developed in other contexts. Examples of this approach include the study by Schachter, Tyson, and Diffley (1976), in which learners' reactions to correct English sentences were compared to their reactions to sentences containing errors typical of learners with the same first language as their own and those typical of another first language group. The hypothesis being examined in that study was developed in a contrastive analysis framework in which it is predicted that a learner's native language will have a very important influence on his or her perception and processing of the target language.

Other studies which have been designed to test specific hypotheses about learners' language knowledge are those by researchers such as Bialystok (1978) and Krashen (see Krashen 1981 for review), who have sought to understand the ways in which learners may make use of different kinds of linguistic knowledge—explicit or learned knowledge (that is, knowledge they know they have) and implicit or acquired knowledge (that is, knowledge which they have and which somehow directs their behaviour, but which they are not ordinarily aware of).

Other research undertaken within a hypothesis-testing framework includes work based on linguistic theory—particularly the hypothesis that there exist linguistic universals which shape language development in its early stages (Gass 1979, 1984, Rutherford 1984). Some researchers have sought to test the hypothesis that there is a 'critical' or 'sensitive' period for second-language acquisition (Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle 1978, Patkowski 1980). Recently a number of researchers have begun to explore various interpretations of linguistic markedness as the basis for developmental sequences in second-language acquisition (Hyltenstam 1983, Mazurkewich 1983, Rutherford 1982, White 1983, Zobl 1983, 1985).

One of the most interesting hypotheses which is beginning to be examined is Krashen's input hypothesis—his hypothesis that the necessary and sufficient conditions for second-language acquisition are met when learners are exposed to language they can understand, which contains linguistic structures just beyond each learner's present language mastery. Krashen further specifies that the language must be interesting to the learners and occur in a context where the learners are relatively at ease—as he says, where their 'affective filters are down'. The input hypothesis, is not, of course, testable as a single global hypothesis, and there is a need for breaking it down to testable sub-hypotheses. (For one such study, see Long 1985.)

1.3 *Experimental pedagogical studies*

The third category of research in second-language acquisition is one which has been very little developed but which has great potential importance for classroom teaching: these are the instruction-based studies in which an attempt is made to manipulate certain variables, for example, the presentation of certain linguistic forms rather than others (Gass 1982, Pienemann 1982, in press, Zobl 1983, 1985), comparing subjects learning language through academic course content to those receiving only formal language instruction (Upshur 1968, Wesche, in press), controlling the complexity of the input language (Chaudron 1983, Long 1985) in order to study the effects of such manipulations on language acquisition. Such studies are very difficult to plan and carry out, but they are producing some very interesting results and are of crucial importance in determining how second-language research findings can be applied to second-language pedagogy.

The research described in these three categories refers to what might be called second-language acquisition research in the mainstream. Other research being carried out in the fields of cognitive psychology, psychological learning theory, linguistics, child language, even medical research on brain functioning may, in time, prove to be the most informative about the underlying processes. In the meantime, however, after fifteen years of 'mainstream' research, it is possible to make a number of generalizations about second-language acquisition.

2. GENERALIZATIONS DRAWN FROM SECOND-LANGUAGE RESEARCH

The ten generalizations listed and illustrated below are supported by different researchers and groups of researchers working in different places and using a variety of research methods to study the performance of learners who represent a number of native languages and target languages.

2.1 *Adults and adolescents can 'acquire' a second language*

The term 'acquire' is meant to reflect somewhat the same thing Krashen means by the term—child-like internalization of the rules underlying the target language. While we must, I think, accept the overwhelming evidence that there is a physiologically determined critical period for the acquisition of native-like pronunciation,[5] the evidence is much less clear for other aspects of the language. Meanwhile, there is considerable evidence that the second-language acquisition *process* is at least partly the same for children and adults. Some adults—especially those who are literate and accustomed to formal instruction—can also benefit from formal instruction in the language, but they are not limited to it simply because they have passed the age of puberty.[6]

2.2 *The learner creates a systematic interlanguage which is often characterized by the same systematic errors as the child learning the same language as the first language, as well as others which appear to be based on the learner's own native language*

The interlanguage systems are influenced by a number of factors. The role of the learner's mother tongue is no doubt one of the most controversial and fascinating areas of research, and the complexity of the interaction between the native language and the target language is beginning to be studied with some success, but there is much we do not know. In any case, all-or-nothing interpretations of the role of the first language have given way to more sophisticated research questions about the nature of the influence. (See Wode 1981, Zobl 1983, 1985, and Gass 1984 for a review of recent research.) This generalization is closely related to the next one.

2.3 *There are predictable sequences in acquisition such that certain structures have to be acquired before others can be integrated*

Learners cannot acquire what they are not 'ready' to acquire—even though they may sometimes temporarily give the appearance of having acquired it. (See Generalization number 4 below.) There is good evidence for this in several domains and for several languages. Unfortunately the acquisition sequences which have been described satisfactorily are very few in number—some English grammatical morphemes (see Krashen 1977 for a review), subject–auxiliary inversion in English questions (Ravem 1974, Wode 1981), word order rules in German (Pienemann 1980, Meisel, Clahsen and Pienemann 1981), etc. Our knowledge here is further limited by the fact that even where sequences are well attested, there are limitations on the number of first-language groups whose second-language acquisition of a particular language has been analysed. Thus, while we may say with conviction that we know what the German word order acquisition sequences are for a Spanish speaker, we have no first-hand information about, say, a Finnish speaker's acquisition of German word order. Some researchers hypothesize that it will be the same and that the role of the first language will be minimal. But there is evidence from other research to suggest that while acquisition sequences are determined in part by linguistic universals or characteristics of the target language, they are also affected by the native language of the learners (Mace-Matluck 1979, Schumann 1979, Wode 1981). To make matters even more complicated, there may be considerable *individual* variation in acquisition sequences, based possibly on different learning (acquisition) strategies, and differences within languages such that some systems of a given language will be acquired in a predictable sequence whereas others are not subject to any particular acquisition sequence. The latter would show variable patterns of acquisition, dependent upon affective and language contact factors (Meisel, Clahsen, and Pienemann 1981).

2.4 *Practice does not make perfect*

Even though there are acquisition sequences, acquisition is not simply linear or cumulative, and having practised a particular form or pattern does not mean that the form or pattern is permanently established. Learners appear to forget forms and structures which they had seemed previously to master and which they had extensively practised. (Some researchers have referred to 'U-shaped development'.) The U shape refers to a graphic representation of learners' accuracy on a line graph. It starts out high, or reaches a high level, then drops for a period before rising again to higher levels of correctness. There are several explanations for this. In the case of my own research, with learners who had little or no contact with English outside the ESL class, the explanation lay in part in the instructional practices (Lightbown 1983a, b). Learners were—for months at a time—presented with one or a small number of forms to learn and practise, and they learned them in absence of related contrasting forms. When they did encounter new forms, it was not a matter of simply adding them on. Instead, the new forms seemed to cause a restructuring of the whole system. Hyltenstam (1977) provides another good example of this.

Such restructuring also occurs outside the classroom acquisition context—even in first-language acquisition. (See Kellerman 1985 for discussion on second-language acquisition; Bowerman 1982 for first language.) It occurs because language is a complex hierarchical system whose components interact in non-linear ways. Seen in these terms, an *increase* in error rate in one area may reflect an increase in complexity or accuracy in another, followed by overgeneralization of a newly acquired structure, or simply by a sort of overload of complexity which forces a restructuring, or at least a simplification, in another part of the system.

2.5 *Knowing a language rule does not mean one will be able to use it in communicative interaction*

This works the other way, too. Being able to use a rule does not mean that one will be able to state it explicitly. Krashen's fascinating corollary to this, of course, is that sometimes the rules easiest to state are hardest to integrate into an interlanguage. As a case in point, one could refer to the virtual non-acquisition of the English possessive *'s* by French-speaking learners of English—a rule so easy to state and 'learn' that it seems impossible that after years of exposure and instruction the form is systematically omitted from communicative language (Lightbown 1983b).

Many researchers have labelled and tried to describe or explain the 'two kinds of performance' or 'two kinds of knowledge' phenomenon: acquisition and learning (Krashen 1976, 1981), implicit and explicit knowledge (Bialystok, 1978, 1981), automatic and controlled responses (McLaughlin 1978, based on Schneider and Shiffrin 1977), communicative and cognitive systems (Lamendella 1977), language-specific cognitive structures and problem solving cognitive structures (Felix 1981). What remains highly controversial is the extent to which the two kinds of performance or knowledge interact with each other in the mind of the learner.

2.6 *Isolated explicit error correction is usually ineffective in changing language behaviour*

This appears to be due to the fact that most errors are not isolated phenomena but part of a system, and to the necessarily sequential nature of some aspects of interlanguage development. In order to make a lasting change in language behaviour, there must be a change in language knowledge. There must be a restructuring of the system itself—something which may take some time and considerably more information than is provided in a single error correction.

Furthermore, even if error correction were sufficient to change language behaviour, it has become clear from research that neither first-language nor second-language learners get reliable error correction (Brown 1973, Chaudron 1977, Fanselow 1977, Long 1977). Correction tends to be unreliable in two ways: (1) learners cannot depend on having every error corrected—even in the classroom—and this means that they cannot depend on having someone else tell them when they are wrong; (2) the 'corrector' may not know—indeed probably knows only rarely—what the real nature of the learner's error is, that is, what it represents in terms of underlying knowledge.'

An anecdote may serve to illustrate how unreliable error correction often is—and to show that there may be times to be grateful that isolated error correction seems to have little long-term effect. As I was observing a teacher of English in her classroom of thirty young French-speakers, she was using a typical audio-lingual technique of asking many students the same question. Often, if one student answered incorrectly, or inadequately, she would simply repeat the question, eliciting a correct response from another student. One exchange went like this:

Teacher: Do you like apples?
Student A: No, I don't.
Teacher: (addressing Student B and pointing to Student A) Does he like apples?
Student B: No, he doesn't.
Student A: (whispering) No, I doesn't.

The student thought he had been corrected and conscientiously repeated the 'correct' form.

2.7 *For most adult learners, acquisition stops—'fossilizes'—before the learner has achieved native-like mastery of the target language*

It has been suggested that this happens when the learner has satisfied the need for communication and/or integration in the target language community, but this is a complicated area, and the reasons for fossilization[8] are very difficult to determine with any certainty. Recently, there has been some evidence that the interlanguage systems which tend to fossilize are those which are based on the three-way convergence of some general—possibly universal—patterns in languages and some rule or rules of the target language and the native language. The question of why learners in similar learning situations differ so much in the point at which fossilization occurs is largely unresolved. What appears certain, however, is that once fossilization occurs, continued exposure is quite ineffective in changing language behaviour, and, so far, further instruction in the language seems to give learners more knowledge *about* the language without altering the fossilized interlanguage system (Long 1981, Shapira 1978, Schumann 1978).

2.8 *One cannot achieve native-like (or near native-like) command of a second language in one hour a day*

No one knows how much time it takes, but it is quite clear that it cannot be done exclusively in a classroom—even in a classroom where the perfect magical balance between form and function, structure and communication, has been struck. The most successful acquirers, young first-language learners, may conservatively be estimated by the age of six to have spent some 12,000 to 15,000 hours 'acquiring' language. The child in a French immersion program might be estimated to have received 4,000 hours of contact with French by Grade 6. In most school programs, the total number of hours after six years of study (for approximately five hours per week) would not reach 1,000.

2.9 *The learner's task is enormous because language is enormously complex*

And neither linguist nor teacher nor textbook writer can really pre-digest the language sufficiently to make the task easy. What the learner has ultimately to learn goes far beyond what the textbook contains, beyond what the teacher can explain, and even beyond what the linguist has described. The studies based on linguistic theories of universals and markedness are particularly helpful in illustrating the complexity of the learner's task and the inadequacy of the best pedagogical grammar to deal with it. (See Rutherford 1980 for valuable discussion.)

2.10 *A learner's ability to understand language in a meaningful context exceeds his/her ability to comprehend decontextualized language and to produce language of comparable complexity and accuracy*

This generalization draws on a wide range of research—both first-language (Bloom 1974b) and second-language (Cummins 1983). And it is related to Krashen's input hypothesis. We do not, however, have an adequate description of the relationship between comprehension and production. Learners sometimes give every impression of fluency and communicative competence when they speak, but manifest serious deficiencies when obliged to comprehend language which they encounter outside a helpful context (Fillmore and McLaughlin 1982), under time pressure (Favreau and Segalowitz 1982), or requiring complex cognitive as well as linguistic processing (d'Anglejan *et al.* 1979, Cummins 1983). And, as far as we are from an adequate description of the comprehension-production relationship, we are even further from understanding the role each plays in furthering the acquisition process.

This rapid review of second-language acquisition research and some of the generalizations we can draw from it serves to point out what a wide variety of studies are being carried out (and might be carried out), studies which are gradually developing our knowledge of the processes underlying second-language acquisition and the factors which in some way affect these processes. The list is surely not exhaustive, but, as I noted above, it is intended to cover the kinds of conclusions which have been reached by different researchers and different research groups examining more than one first-language/second-language combination.

3. APPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS TO SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

A few selected quotations from the 'conclusions and implications' sections of some research papers or from other papers which have interpreted research for teachers and syllabus planners would make it very clear that, in many cases, expectations for the applications of research have been very great indeed! It would also be clear that many of the recommendations based on second-language acquisition research have been (a) premature, (b) based on research which was extremely narrow in scope, (c) based on overinterpretations of the data, (d) based largely on intuition, or (e) all of the above. The desire for immediate application of research findings is not limited to language teaching—although it may be particularly characteristic of the field of education in general (Kerlinger 1977).

Of course, a number of researchers have always urged that we proceed very carefully in making specific recommendations about language teaching on the basis of research in language acquisition. For example, Evelyn Hatch concludes her 1978 article 'Apply with caution' by insisting that 'the only question the researcher should answer is the one he asks' (p. 138). Many of us, however—researchers and teachers—have been anxious to go beyond the actual research questions to their implications for teaching—hoping to see our great expectations for research fulfilled. Has second-language acquisition research to date fulfilled our great expectations for the applicability of research to teaching? Does it tell us *what* to teach? Does it tell us *how*?

To the first question (*what* to teach), the answer would be an emphatic *no*, at least not in terms of the forms and structures of language. The generalization most relevant to the question of *what* to teach is the one which refers to the existence of acquisition sequences. And this might at first suggest that we now know—at least for some limited domains—the order in which certain forms or structures should be taught. In fact, such a suggestion is only now at the stage where it has become a potentially testable hypothesis. For example, we can try some pedagogical experiments which would manipulate the presentation of structures known to be acquired in a certain sequence by learners in previous research studies and look at the results of such manipulation. We might then be able to say something about the effect of making the teaching sequence match the acquisition of 'natural' sequence.

A few researchers have undertaken such studies and the results are certainly interesting—but they are also in some sense contradictory. One finds both the claim that one should teach that which is just one step beyond the learner's current level of performance (or competence) (Pienemann 1982) *and* the claim that, by teaching that which is several steps beyond the learner's current level, one may lead the learner not only to learn what is taught, but also to generalize to the less complex members of that structure or group of structures which may not have been taught (Gass 1982, Zobl 1983, 1985).

These apparently contradictory findings can be explained in part by the fact that they result from studies based on different interpretations of what acquisition sequences are and how much being, at, for example, 'stage 3' implies about the learner's knowledge of 'stages 1 and 2'. The fact is, however, that the resulting recommendations about *what* to teach are simply contradictory and leave both teacher and syllabus planner without the information necessary for making appropriate choices about what to teach.

Another crucial fact to keep in mind is that the research which has provided evidence for 'natural sequences' is research which has been carried out with learners who—in addition to or instead of formal instruction—have had extensive non-classroom exposure to the target language. It would be very difficult to support the claim that all such learners have encountered the forms or structures in the same order or with the same frequency. Even though there is some research evidence that certain forms which are acquired early are also items which occur with high frequency in the language that learners hear (Larsen-Freeman 1976a, b, Lightbown 1980), there is no evidence that, in the natural environment, the early-learned forms are presented *in the absence* of others. On the contrary, it is likely that the language which learners encountered contained a wide variety of structures and forms—some of which they acquired and some which they did not. The logical conclusion of the argument that frequency determines acquisition sequences would be that that which is most frequent is first acquired or best acquired, and this is clearly *not* the case. In short, knowing what learners acquire first (or last) cannot in itself tell us what should be taught first (or last).

If second-language acquisition research does not tell us *what* to teach, does it tell us *how*? Obviously a number of the generalizations listed above are related to the *how*—issues such as the ineffectiveness of error correction, the nonlinear nature of language acquisition, the observation that adults are capable of 'child-like' acquisition, the evidence that one can know a language rule and not be able to use it. Perhaps these generalizations can be said to give us some idea of *how not* to teach. The method of proceeding step-by-step, from one grammatical building block to another—each block carefully and precisely placed, once and for all—simply finds no support in the acquisition research. It is probably an excellent method for some things—learning to program a computer is one which comes to mind—but it does not seem to work for language acquisition. However, it is fairly obvious that language teaching methodology has not waited for second-language acquisition research to give the signal to move from lockstep, form-based approaches to approaches which encourage—or at least permit—creative, communicative language use, which limit the use of error correction, which provide learners with a fairly rich linguistic environment rather than a restricted set of formulae to be learned by heart. In fact, one of the happy coincidences of language teaching and learning is the *convergence* of language acquisition research findings and proposals for 'communicative language teaching' practice, the latter developed independently on the basis of discourse analysis, theories of communicative competence, and pedagogical experience, with little or no knowledge of or regard for the current acquisition research (see Breen and Candlin 1980, Brumfit 1980, Brumfit and Johnson 1979, Newmark 1966, Widdowson 1978, Wilkins 1974).[9] Indeed it may be only the Krashen and Terrell 'Natural Approach' (1983) which is *claimed* to be based on second-language acquisition research. Even in this case, the fact is that Terrell was independently developing his teaching approach (Terrell 1977) at about the same time that Krashen was developing his second-language acquisition theory (Krashen 1976).

Does this mean that we should not have 'great expectations' for the application of research to teaching? Second-language acquisition research does not tell teachers *what* to teach, and what it says about *how* to teach they had already figured out. However, second-language acquisition research has brought some *explanatory* support to so-called 'communicative language teaching' and I believe this support has great importance. That is, even *if* communicative language teaching was not 'caused' by second-language acquisition research, the research helps to explain *why* it can be expected to be effective. It is worth noting that it has always been virtually impossible to demonstrate that one approach to language teaching is better than another, partly because new approaches have often proved to be identical in practice to old ones, with only the name changed. And while communicative language teaching is not based on language acquisition research, it is equally not based on the kind of educational evaluation research which would permit one to say with certainty that this approach will succeed where others have failed. Thus, the independent support from research should prove valuable. Even though the most important support for any approach to language teaching will come from teachers whose experience tells them that it works better than other approaches, references to language acquisition research may be effective in lending support to those who must contend with sceptics when they suggest changes in language teaching behaviour.

Of course, no amount of mere information will be sufficient to alter behaviour. There is an analogy here to the non-equivalence of *knowing* and *using* a language rule. Teachers will have to experience language teaching approaches that work better than those they had previously experienced if they are fully to integrate these approaches. Nevertheless, if teachers—especially new teachers—come to language teaching with some knowledge of the results of language acquisition research, they will have much more realistic expectations about what can be accomplished. Teachers who are aware of second-language acquisition findings may be more willing to expect adults and adolescents to be able to discover the underlying patterns of language without experiencing them in discrete item-by-item presentations. If they are particularly well informed about the findings of language acquisition research, they may be aware of some particular areas where even very advanced learners will continue to experience difficulty. Thus, even though this, as noted above, does not tell them what to teach or when, it may remove some of the anxiety associated with the fact that certain things which have been 'covered' by teacher or text have not been acquired.

Teachers with knowledge of second-language acquisition research will not *expect* —of themselves or their students—that they can accomplish the task of language acquisition through repeated practice of correct forms. They can relax about letting some opportunities for correction go by, because they recognize the learners' need to go beyond routines and rote-learned formulas. They can expect a student to make errors on something he or she seemed to know last week, understanding that the errors may reflect growth in another domain and the restructuring of the learner's system. They can expect that certain learners, particularly those who have functioned successfully in a second-language environment with functional language skills and lots of errors, will not noticeably alter their language behaviour during a period of instruction. They can accept this—without blaming their own poor teaching or the students' laziness or lack of intelligence!

Teachers who know something about language acquisition research will expect learners to perform differently on tests of metalinguistic knowledge from the way they perform when they have something important to say. And teachers can expect not to understand exactly what error it is that a learner is making. They can expect *not* to be able always to explain why English does things like this or like that, and they will know that students can be expected to acquire certain complex structures of English without explicit explanation.

Perhaps I can summarize my view of the role of second-language acquisition research for preparing or renewing teachers' knowledge and skills as teachers by saying that I see it as part of teacher *education* rather than teacher *training*. Some of my students and former students claim that their language acquisition courses were among the most 'useful' courses in their program, while others ask why they have to take these 'theoretical' courses. These different views reflect the different expectations which teachers—both pre-service and in-service—have with regard to the courses they take. Language acquisition research can offer no formulas, no recipes, but it is an essential component of teacher education, because it can give teachers appropriate expectations for themselves and their students.

I would like to refer again to Evelyn Hatch's reminder that the only question a researcher should answer is the one he or she asks. Small indeed is the number of language acquisition studies which have actually asked a question such as 'Under what conditions can a learner's progress through acquisition sequences be speeded up?', or 'How can we determine exactly what a learner is ready to learn next?', or 'Can fossilization be prevented by providing instruction at a certain point in development?' (What kind of instruction? What point in development?) Of course, most of these questions would have to be broken down and restated before they could be addressed by research. What I am suggesting is that *only* research which is pedagogically based and which asks pedagogical questions can be expected directly to answer pedagogical questions, and such pedagogical questions should be formulated at least partly in terms of what is known from language acquisition research.

What language acquisition research does, or will do as it continues to explore, is to reveal more about what learners *do*, what they *know*, and—perhaps some time in the future—*how* they come to *do* and *know* these things. It is appropriate for second-language acquisition research to explore these questions and it is not appropriate to *expect* that pedagogical questions will be directly and immediately answered by acquisition research.

On the other hand, pedagogical research cannot answer fundamental questions about the nature of language acquisition—nor should it be expected to. But it can answer some short-term questions about 'what works'. Such short-term results are useful for getting teachers from day to day while they await the fulfillment of the great expectations from what might be called *basic* or *non-applied* (or even 'pure') research.

Let me emphasize that there is no suggestion here that one should give up one kind of research and do another—only that one should recognize the limitations on the questions being asked, and therefore on the possible answers which will come from each. The time has come for second-language research to seek to develop generalizable theories of second-language acquisition by testing—in a cooperative and systematic way—some of the hypotheses which have been generated by the descriptive case studies or from psychological and linguistic theory. Hypothesis-testing research based on linguistic theory, contrastive analysis, and the input hypothesis should continue, and such research should be complemented by more specifically pedagogical research.

In 1976, Tarone, Swain, and Fathman published a review of research in second-language acquisition which they titled 'Some limitations to the classroom applications of second language acquisition research'. The seven limitations they enumerated were

1 the restricted linguistic scope of the studies
2 lack of data on cognitive processes and learning strategies
3 limited information about the role of individual variables
4 insufficient information about the role of social and environmental variables
5 undeveloped methodology for data collection
6 undeveloped methodology for data analysis
7 the limited number of replicated studies

Nearly ten years later we could quite reasonably use the same list. This is not to say that there has been no progress. But our understanding of acquisition is still far from complete, and our ability to make recommendations is still very restricted.

Most language acquisition researchers are interested in teaching practice. Many of them became involved in their research because they were themselves language teachers. And most of the early research reports in the field were presented at teachers' meetings such as the TESOL convention. But it is worthy of note that second-language acquisition researchers have, in the past few years, increasingly arranged their own research meetings, apart from the teaching conventions where they are always asked by someone in the audience to relate their findings to teaching practice. The researchers themselves have come to recognize that the field of second-language acquisition research has many internal problems of methodology, analysis, and interpretation, problems which need to be dealt with among fellow researchers if genuine progress is to be made in understanding the language acquisition process. It is in doing well the work of language acquisition research that they will best be able to meet their own great expectations of contributing meaningfully to second language pedagogy.

NOTES

[1] This is a revised version of a paper presented at TESL Ontario on 26 November 1983, in Toronto. In attempting to assess the current state of the relationship between second-language acquisition research and second-language teaching, I have borrowed and adapted ideas which many of my colleagues have expressed before me. I am indebted to them. I am particularly grateful to Michael Long, Henry Widdowson, and the editors of *Applied Linguistics* for valuable comments. Of course, I acknowledge the limitations and any possible errors in the paper as my own.

[2] Howard Nicholas of LaTrobe University in Melbourne suggested that a better title for the paper might be 'Great Expectations: What the Dickens Does Second-Language Research Have to Do with Second-Language Teaching?'

[3] The examples for each category are just that: examples. Obviously it is far beyond the scope of this paper to review the field.

[4] I am using the term 'hypothesis testing' in a non-technical sense. Very few language acquisition studies can be said to test hypotheses in the technical sense (see Long 1983), McLaughlin 1980, Ochsner 1979, and Schumann 1983 for discussions).

[5] There are challenges to the view, however. See, for example Neufeld (1978).

[6] In saying that learners can 'benefit' from formal instruction I do not intend to imply that I have resolved the controversy which is associated with Krashen's hypothesis that formal learning does not alter acquisition but merely affects performance in certain contexts. In either case, a certain 'benefit' accrues to the second-language learner in his or her *use* of the target language.

[7] For an interesting study of a particular error type which is often misinterpreted, see Schachter and Rutherford (1979).

[8] The term 'fossilization' comes originally from Selinker (1972).

[9] Some of these writers refer to child language research and Corder's (1967) suggestion that second-language learners acquire language in ways which are similar to those of *child* language acquisition. The revolution in language teaching began, however, before there was any substantial body of *second*-language acquisition research to draw from. Note that the references given are by no means those of the earliest publication of these writers, rather those which I consider to be most complete or accessible.

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Errata: Day 3 at a Glance

1. Discussion of the relationship between theories of language learning and classroom materials
2. Reading introduces the concept of learner language and error
3. Analysis of language learner utterances introduces the concept of interference
4. Reading and a further analysis of learner language develops the concept of error classification according to interference, developmental, transfer of training and other kinds of errors
5. Reading introduces the significance of learner errors
6. The developmental sequences of learner language is presented and discussed briefly
7. The differences and similarities between "natural" first and second language orders of acquisition are examined
8. Characteristics of "natural" versus classroom language learning are considered
9. Concluding remarks establish that learner language is systematic and that errors are a necessary developmental stage. P.M. Lightbown's article *Core ESL in Quebec* is assigned as a summary activity

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Ce module fait partie d'une série de quatre qui a pour but de faciliter l'organisation de sessions de perfectionnement collectif pour les professeurs d'anglais, langue seconde, aux niveaux primaire et secondaire. Il présente des activités couvrant cinq jours de perfectionnement. La présentation de chacune de ces activités comprend des objectifs, des stratégies d'enseignement, des notes explicatives ainsi que des questions de discussion.

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COLLECTIF EN DIDACTIQUE
DE L'ANGLAIS LANGUE SECONDE

9170955-B

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

MODULE 1

Participants' Workbook

Direction générale des programmes
Direction de la formation du
personnel scolaire

May 1989

Language Acquisition

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Preface

The idea for the development of a set of in-service teacher training modules, of which this is one, was originally suggested to the ministère de l'Éducation by the two associations for second-language teachers of Quebec.

The modules are designed to facilitate the organization of in-service teacher-training workshops (sessions de perfectionnement collectif) which school boards periodically offer to their personnel as the need arises. It is hoped that these modules will allow school boards to prepare their in-service training within a clear and coherent framework of activities.

Each module is intended for a five-day session. The modules progress logically from language acquisition to evaluation of communicative competence. Particular emphasis has been placed on methodological issues in the teaching of English as a second language.

In principle, any consultant or teacher with a solid background in second-language pedagogy should be able to lead the workshops using these modules. A certain amount of preparation and careful reading beforehand will nonetheless be required. However, the need to seek out human or physical resources beyond the individual school board should be minimal.

In English as a second language, four modules are available:

Module 1	Language Acquisition
Module 2	Methodology I
Module 3	Methodology II
Module 4	Evaluation

The content of the modules was determined by a steering committee composed of representatives from the ministère de l'Éducation, the Association québécoise des enseignants de français langue seconde (AQEFLS) and the Société pour la promotion de l'anglais langue seconde au Québec (SPEAQ). This committee favoured a pragmatic and inductive procedure in the design of the module: through practical experience and concrete activities participants will be led to general principles and pedagogical know-how.

The modules were written by individuals who had both an extensive background in the particular subject, experience in teacher training and in the creation of pedagogical documents. A field test of each module was conducted with groups of teachers from both the primary and secondary levels of various school boards. As far as possible, the present version of the modules takes into account their comments and suggestions.

We hope that these modules provide a flexible and satisfactory means of organizing in-service training sessions for teachers of English as a second language and thereby contribute to an improvement in the quality of instruction they offer their students.

The Steering Committee

Acknowledgments

The design and development of these in-service teacher training modules would not have been possible without the co-operation of a number of individuals and institutions. We would particularly like to thank:

- **The authors**

Module 1	*Language Acquisition* **Patsy Lightbown** **Jude Rand** **Nina Spada**
Module 2	*Methodology I* **Louise Gascon**
Module 3	*Methodology II* **Thérèse O'Farrell-Gagnon**
Module 4	*Evaluation* **Louise Gascon**

- **Those individuals** who graciously agreed to conduct the field tests of these Modules and their school boards who offered their full collaboration during the field tests:

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- The **Société pour la promotion de l'enseignement de l'anglais langue seconde au Québec** (SPEAQ) and the **Association québécoise des enseignants de français langue seconde (AQEFLS),** which participated in all aspects of the project.

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Organization of the Module

• Duration and sequence

This module is intended as a unit; it should be given in its entirety and in the order in which it is presented. Each module has been divided into segments of one day each. However, some variations in timing may occur due to the background of the group to whom it is being presented.

While it is possible to give this module as one block of five days, it may be necessary to spread the module over a longer period of time. However, it is essential that Day 3 and Day 4 be grouped together.

• The participants

Considering the nature of the module as a unit, it is essential that the participants attend all sessions in sequence.

It is not necessary that all participants teach at the same level. The field test of this module demonstrated that having a group of teachers from both primary and secondary levels provided a rich and valuable forum for exchange.

• Activities

Each activity has:

- A summary description
- A procedure

General Objective and Content of the Module

• Objective

To achieve a better understanding of the roles of teacher and learner in the second language acquisition process.

• Content

Day 1
Individual Differences in Second Language Learning

Day 2
Theories of Language Learning

Day 3
Learner Language and Developmental Stages in "Natural" and Classroom Environments

Day 4
Learner Language and Input in the Second Language Classroom

Day 5
Input and Interaction in the Second Language Classroom

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

DAY 1

Table of Activities: Day 1

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Objectives of Day 1

- ***To become familiar with the individual differences influencing second language learning***
- ***To become familiar with the processes operating in both "natural" and classroom language acquisition; and with the characteristics of both "natural" and classroom language learning environments***

At the end of the session, the participants will:

- better understand the roles of teacher and learner in the second language acquisition process
- appreciate the similiarities and individual differences which may influence second language learning success
- recognize the fact that individuals employ different strategies to learn languages
- understand the influence of factors such as age, motivation, personality and aptitude on second language learning
- understand that starting young is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for total mastery of a second language

Day 1

Activity 1 ***Introduction and Administration***

Objective To introduce the workshop leader and the global aims of the workshop

Notes:

Day 1

Activity 2 ***Objectives of the Module***

Objective To become familiar with the objectives and layout of the module

- Read the following list of objectives.

Global Objective

- You will achieve a better understanding of the roles of teacher and learner in the second language acquisition process.

General Objectives

- You will become familiar with:

A. Individual differences influencing second language learning. (e.g., age factors, attitude, motivation, aptitude)

B. Theories of language learning, their evolution and their relation to language teaching methods

C. Learner language: the errors and developmental stages which reflect the processes operating in first and second language acquisition

____

____

____

Sample Exercise 1

To follow General Objective C — Learner Language : the errors and developmental stages which reflect the processes operating in first and second language acquisition.

The following are sentences which have been produced by both first and second language learners, but which are not identified as being one or the other. They are divided into three groups: questions and subordinate clauses, errors in verb forms, and omissions and overgeneralizations.

Read the sentences wihthin each group and distinguish first from second language speakers. Write your answer in the space provided.

I. Questions and subordinate clauses

a) I don't know what's that. ________________

b) What that is? What this is? ________________

c) Why you don't like me? ________________

d) Do I can have that one? ________________

e) You want more milk? ________________

II. Errors in verb forms

a) The car is go fast. ________________

b) The little boy who erase the board is like Pinocchio. ________________

c) There's two girls and two boys. ________________

d) The teacher have a purple dress. ________________

e) She wear a watch. ________________

f) He don't want to have noise in the class. ________________

III. Omissions and overgeneralizations

a) The teacher desk is in front. ________________

b) I live far away. I live farter than you. ________________

c) Can he do it himself? ________________

d) He pulling the rope. ________________

e) The children don't like that. ________________

f) They have too many mouses in their house. ________________

g) That one is mines. ________________

D. Processes and strategies in both "natural" and classroom language acquisition (e.g., generalization, imitation)

Sample Exercise 2

To follow General Objective D — Processes and Strategies in both "natural" and classroom language acquisition (e.g., generalization, imitation, etc.)

The following are verb errors which have been produced by both first and second language learners, some of whom have had formal SL instruction and some of whom have had informal ESL instruction.

Distinguish between those who have had formal SL instruction and those who have had informal SL instruction. Tick the appropriate column.

Verbs errors	Unclear	Formal	Informal
a) The boy have a green shirt on.			
b) I have 11 years old.			
c) He's takes a cookie.			
d) Will you make him to stop that?			
e) It's means the students can't go.			
f) He's give the girl a book.			
g) It's three hour and the school is finish.			
h) That's finish.			
i) The boy have a jacket black.			
j) Is a funny picture.			
k) They have another boy who is said ... to this girl ... shut up.			

E. Characteristics of "natural" and classroom learning environments (e.g., input, interaction, time factors, feedback on error)

____

____

____

F. The distinction between input (language available in the environment) and intake (the input the learner is willing and able to receive)

____

____

____

G. Types of teacher/student and student/student interactions which have been shown to be effective in facilitating language acquisition

____

____

____

Day	1	
Activity	3	**Personal Second Language Learning Experience**
Objective	To break the ice, and to illustrate the similarities and individual differences which may influence second language learning success	

Notes:

Day	1	
Activity	4	***INDIVIDUAL LEARNING STRATEGIES***
Objective	To become aware of the fact that individuals employ different strategies to learn languages.	

GOOD LANGUAGE LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE

Part I

Strategies

If you wanted to learn a second or third language, how would *you* go about it? Travel? Study ? Some would say that travel in the foreign country or immersion in the other culture is the best possible way of learning a second language, so if given the choice between classroom study and travel, we would probably choose the travel option. But this is not always possible. What works for you ? Would you do best with firm guidance, or left to your own devices ? Would you prefer formal, systematic instruction or an informal exposure to the language ?

The following is a list of strategies commonly thought to aid in the acquisition of various aspects of a second language. Which ones suit you best ?

Answer this question by labelling the strategies within each category according to how useful they would be for you; i. e., label the most useful strategies "√"and the least useful strategies "X". Don't think too long about your answer. Give your first impression.

LEARNING THE STRUCTURE OF THE LANGUAGE

A ___ Using grammar books, studying and memorizing rules
B ___ Constant repetition, being drilled or drilling myself
C ___ Having a teacher who corrects my mistakes
D ___ Doing communicative activities in the classroom
E ___ Interacting with native speakers outside of the classroom
F ___ Other: ______

DEVELOPING RECEPTIVE SKILLS

A ___ Reading extensively on my own (newspapers, novels, magazines, etc.)
B ___ Reading ESL materials and doing reading comprehension exercises
C ___ Listening to radio, TV, etc
D ___ Listening to conversations, dialogues and lectures, etc., specifically prepared for ESL instruction, and doing prescribed exercises and activities
E ___ Interacting with native speakers outside class
F ___ Other: ——

DEVELOPING PRODUCTIVE SKILLS

A ___ Writing compositions, essays, letters, etc., and having them corrected by my teacher
B ___ Writing letters and stories, etc., without correction
C ___ Informally discussing selected topics, expressing my thoughts and opinions
D ___ Doing debates, role-plays and activities which are like the situations in which I use English outside class
E ___ Memorizing and reciting dialogues
F ___ Doing pronunciation exercises in a language lab
G ___ Interacting with native speakers outside class
H ___ Practising with classmates; i. e., practising with other non-native speakers of English
I Other: —
___

DEVELOPING VOCABULARY

A ___ Using a bilingual dictionary
B ___ Using a unilingual dictionary
C ___ Using no dictionary — guessing from context
D ___ Keeping vocabulary lists and memorizing definitions
E ___ Reading extensively on my own, with a dictionary
F ___ Reading extensively on my own, without a dictionary
G ___ Interacting with native speakers
H ___ Other: —

DEVELOPING CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS

A ___ Learning about the social and cultural rules (e. g., politeness forms, how to interrupt, disagree)
B ___ Practising with classmates; i. e., practising with other non-native speakers of English
C ___ Interacting with native speakers outside class
D ___ Doing assignments which necessitate contact with native speakers (e. g., getting information over the phone)
E ___ Other: —

Day 1

Activity 5 ***PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOOD LANGUAGE LEARNER***

Objective To become aware of the individual characteristics which contribute to language learningsuccess

GOOD LANGUAGE LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE

Part II

Personal Characteristics

It seems that some people have a much easier time of learning languages than others. Some children can string together 5-, 6- and 7-word sentences at the same time that other children are just beginning to label items in their immediate environment. In the same L2 classroom, some students progress rapidly through the initial stages of a new language while others struggle along making very slow progress. Are there personal characteristics that make one learner more successful than the other, and if so, what are they ?

The following is a list of some of the characteristics commonly thought to contribute to successful language learning. Again, label the characteristics according to how likely they are to contribute to success; i.e., label the characteristics most likely to contribute to success "√" and the characteristics least likely to contribute to success in learning "X".

A good language learner:

A —– begins learning in childhood
B —– has un above-average I.Q.
C —– has good academic skills
D —– is willing to make mistakes
E —– practises
F —– tries to get a message across even if specific language knowledge is lacking
G —– constantly looks for patterns in the language
H —– analyses his or her own speech and that of others
I —– pays attention to whether what he or she has said is grammatically correct
J —– tries to guess meaning even when not all of the words are familiar
K —– enjoys grammar exercises
L —– has a good self-image and lots of confidence

Day	1	
Activity	6	*Individual Differences*
Objective	To become familiar with the roles motivation, aptitude, personality and age play in second language learning	
Time	40-45 min	

- **Read the text on the following page paying particular attention to how the principles discussed can be translated into positive action in the second language classroom.**

Motivation and Attitude

Motivation in second language learning is a complex phenomenon which can be defined in terms of two things: the learner's communicative need and his or her attitudes toward the second language community. A learner's degree of motivation is a function of his or her overall goal and/or his or her orientation toward the target culture. If a learner needs to speak the second language in a wide range of social situations or to fulfill professional ambitions, he or she will perceive the communicative value of the second language and will therefore be motivated to acquire proficiency in it. Likewise, if the learner has favorable attitudes toward the speakers of the language he or she is learning, he or she will desire more contact with them. Additionally, if we consider that an individual's identity is closely linked with the way he or she speaks, it follows that when he or she speaks a new language he or she is adopting some of the identity markers of another cultural group. Depending on the learner's attitudes then, learning a second language can be a source of enrichment or a source of resentment. If the speaker's only reason for learning the second language is external pressure, his or her internal motivation may be minimal and his or her general attitude toward learning may be negative.

One factor which often affects motivation is the social dynamic or power relationship between the languages. That is, members of a minority group may have different attitudes and motivation when learning the language of a majority group than those of majority group members learning a minority language. The exact effect on attitudes and motivation is not always predictable. Nevertheless, the fact that languages exist in social contexts cannot be overlooked when we consider how learners will react toward learning a second language. This is true even of children learning a second language.

The Quebec situation is unique in that each of the two major language groups is both a majority and a minority at the same time. Francophones are a majority in Quebec but a minority in the greater North American context. Anglophones are a minority in Quebec but a majority in the greater North American context. And both languages are major world languages. Thus, due to this unique combination of circumstances and due to the history of political relations between the French and the English in Quebec, some second language learners are likely to have quite strong feelings which may affect their motivation to learn the second language.

But what does this mean for the teacher of second languages in Quebec classrooms? What can a teacher do if a learner resents having to learn English or French and has little intrinsic motivation to do so ?

First of all, it is clear that the two sources of motivation, a strong external need (for example, for purposes of employment) and a favorable attitude toward the target *culture, do not exclude each other. Most learners are motivated by a mixture of the two. Thus, one of the teacher's tasks is to design lessons which enhance the image of the second language community. This can be done by providing the learners with activities which bring the learners into closer contact with the culture, on the premise that, contrary to the old saying "familiarity breeds contempt", familiarity, in fact, breeds interest and tolerance. But more importantly, the classroom should provide opportunities for success in the second language because nothing succeeds like success. The important part of classroom motivation lies in the classroom setting itself and not in some long-range goal to learn the language, especially for primary and early secondary learners. It is the immediate need to express an idea and the pleasure experienced when this is done that motivates second language learning.*

What is significant here is that it is motivation which depends on immediate goals, such as completing a task or communicating some real need or meaning, that is most amenable to influence by the teacher. Motivation can be developed by careful selection of activities that create opportunities for success in the classroom and which foster intrinsic interest. Especially at the primary school level, long-term motivation plays little part. And even at the secondary level where discussion of future job prospects and travel to other parts of the world are relevant and motivating, progress is influenced by a need to communicate here and now.

❑❑❑

Pre-study Questions

- **Does having an extroverted personality really help when learning a second language? If so, in what ways?**
- **Is there a special kind of knowledge which some people have that enables them to learn languages more quickly than others?**
- **Does a certain level of intelligence make it easier to learn languages?**
- **Does learning a language when one is older make it more difficult?**
- **Can individual learner characteristics such as these be identified, isolated and measured?**

Individual Differences

The purpose of this activity is to discuss some of these questions by focussing on four individual characteristics of learners: age, aptitude, personality and motivation. We will discuss how these factors have been investigated and look at some of the results of studies which have examined relationships between age, aptitude, personality characteristics, motivation and second language learning. We will also discuss some of the problems involved in carrying out research of this type.

Part I: How the Research is done and Difficulties with the Research

Perhaps the best way to begin our discussion is to describe in general terms how research which has investigated the influence of learner characteristics on second language learning has been carried out. Typically, when researchers are interested in finding out whether an individual factor such as motivation, for example, affects second language learning, they proceed in the following manner. First, a group of learners is selected for the study. Second, they are given a test to measure their second language proficiency. Third, they are given a test to measure the personal characteristic being studied (in this case, a motivation questionnaire). Finally, both tests are scored and the researcher investigates (usually in a statistical manner) whether a learner with a high score on the proficiency test is also more likely to have a high score on the motivation measure. If this is the case, the researcher may claim that a high level of motivation is related to success in language learning. A similar procedure can be used to measure the effects of intelligence or certain personality characteristics on second language learning, using an I. Q. test for example, in the first case and a personality measure in the second.

Although this procedure seems rather straightforward, there are several difficulties with it. The first problem is related to the fact that it is not possible to directly observe and measure qualities such as aptitude, motivation, extroversion, or even "intelligence" These are just labels for an entire range of behaviors and characteristics. Furthermore, because characteristics such as these are not independent, it will come as no surprise to learn that different researchers have often used the same labels to describe different sets of behavioral traits. Let's continue with our example of the effects of motivation on second language proficiency to elaborate this point. Typically, in motivation questionnaires, learners are asked whether they willingly seek out opportunities to use their second language with native speakers and if so, how often they do this. The assumption behind such a question is that if learners respond by saying that they often seek out opportunities to interact with speakers of the second language, that they are highly motivated to learn. Although this assumption seems reasonable, it creates *problems, because if a learner responds by saying yes to this question, it not only suggests that the learner is highly motivated, but also that the learner is receiving more opportunities for language practice in informal contexts. Because it is impossible to separate these two factors (i. e. willingness to interact and opportunities to interact) and many others related to personal characteristics of the learner, many researchers have been seriously criticized for attempting to present these factors as independent features.*

Another problem which makes it difficult to reach conclusions about relationships between individual learner characteristics and second language learning is related to how language proficiency is defined and measured. As we know, language proficiency can be measured in many different ways. For example, we can use a test of reading comprehension, a multiple choice grammar test, students' grades in class or a test of oral fluency skills as a measure of proficiency. However, we can not say that these tests measure the same aspects of language proficiency. This makes it difficult for researchers to reach firm conclusions about what factors lead to greater proficiency. It may be useful once again to refer to the personal factor of motivation to illustrate this point further. It may happen (and it often does) that while one study reports that learners with a higher level of motivation are more successful language learners than others, another study may find that highly motivated learners do not perform any better on a proficiency test than learners with much less motivation to learn the second language. A possible explanation for these different findings is that the language proficiency tests in the two studies were not measuring the same kind of knowledge. That is , it is possible the highly motivated learners in the first study were found to be more successful because the proficiency test measured their oral communication skills,whereas in the second study highly motivated learners were not found to be more successful because the test was primarily a measure of grammatical knowledge. What conflicting results such as these suggest is that high levels of motivation to learn a second language may be more related to certain aspects of language proficiency than others.

There are other problems associated with this line of research, but before we discuss them further, let's have a look at the findings of some of the studies which have investigated the four individual learner characteristics we are considering in this activity. We will begin with intelligence and aptitude as factors in second language learning.

Part II: Intelligence/Aptitude

It has been argued that learning a second language in a classroom setting involves two kinds of knowledge: intelligence and aptitude. Intelligence which is described as a general academic or reasoning ability, (often referred to as the g factor), is involved in the learning of other school subjects as well as language learning. Aptitude, however, is described as a set of specific cognitive abilities which are needed to learn second languages. Let's consider intelligence first.

- ***Intelligence***

A link between intelligence and second language learning has been found by several researchers. Over the years, many studies using different I. Q. tests and different methods of assessing language learning have found that intelligence levels were a good means of predicting how successful a learner would be at language learning. Furthermore, some recent studies have shown that intelligence may be more strongly related to certain kinds of second language abilities than others. For example, in a study with French immersion children in Montreal, it was found that while intelligence was related to the development of French second language reading, grammar and vocabulary, it was unrelated to oral productive skills. Similar findings have been reported in other studies where intelligence was highly related to proficiency in reading, dictation and writing but not in listening comprehension and free oral production. What these findings suggest is that intelligence seems to be more related to those second language skills which are used in the formal study of a language, (i. e. reading, language analysis, writing, vocabulary study), but that intelligence is much less likely to influence the way in which oral communication skills are developed. Therefore, intelligence seems to be a strong factor when it comes to learning second languages in classrooms, particularly if the instruction is formal. When the classroom instruction is less formal, however, (i. e. one which is more communicative), intelligence may play a lesser role. This may explain why immersion programs are successful with learners who have a wide range of abilities.

- ***Aptitude***

Although defining intelligence is problematic, aptitude is even more difficult to define. This factor has been investigated most intensively by researchers who are interested in developing tests which can predict how successful a language learner will be before taking a second language course. The two most widely known aptitude tests both measure 1) the ability to identify and memorize new sounds; 2) the ability to understand how words function grammatically in sentences; 3) the ability to figure out grammatical rules from language samples. It is thought that if learners have these abilities, they will be more successful language learners.

The relationship between aptitude and language learning has been measured in terms of the proficiency levels achieved by different classroom learners. The usual procedure is to obtain scores on an aptitude test and scores on a language proficiency measure, (i. e. teachers' class grades or a language test). The two sets of scores are statistically correlated — in other words, the scores on the aptitude test are compared with the scores on the language proficiency measure to see if students with high scores on one of the measures are the same students with high scores on the other.

If it turns out that students with high aptitude scores are the ones with high proficiency scores, then the researcher may claim that there is a strong relationship between aptitude and proficiency.

Although there have been a number of studies examining this factor, the results are in no way conclusive. One of the most serious problems is that it is not clear what the abilities are that are thought to constitute aptitude. That is, many of the behaviors associated with it may be just as easily associated with another learner characteristic such as personality or general intelligence.

We will now turn our attention to some of the different personality characteristics which have been examined in relationship to second language learning.

Part III: Personality characteristics

A number of personality characteristics have been proposed as likely to affect second language learning. And although these proposals are supported by observation and intuition, it has not been easy to demonstrate their effects on second language learning in empirical studies. What has often happened is that different studies measuring the same personality characteristic get different results. For example, as mentioned in the introduction, it is often suggested that an extroverted person is well suited to language learning. However, studies which have been carried out to examine this particular personality trait do not always support this conclusion. Although some studies have found that success in language learning is highly related to learners' scores on some traits often associated with extroversion such as assertiveness and adventuresomeness, others have found that successful language learners did not get high scores on tests of extroversion.

Another aspect of personality which has been studied is inhibition. It has been suggested that inhibition discourages risk-taking, which is necessary for progress in language learning. Some have also argued that this is a particular problem for adolescents, who are more self-conscious than younger learners. A well known set of studies which found support for the claim that inhibition is a negative force in language learning involve an analysis of the effects of small doses of alcohol on pronunciation. In these studies, subjects who received small doses of alcohol did better on pronunciation tests than those who did not drink any alcohol. While results such as these are interesting, (as well as somewhat amusing), they are not convincing, since experiments such as these are far removed from the reality of the classroom situation. We may also note, in passing, that when larger doses of alcohol were administered, pronunciation rapidly deteriorated.

Several other personality characteristics such as self-esteem, empathy, dominance, talkativeness, responsiveness, etc., have been studied. However, in general, the available research does not show a clearly defined effect of personality on second language acquisition. And, as indicated earlier, the major difficulty in investigating personality characteristics is that of identification and measurement. Another explanation which has been offered for the mixed findings of personality studies is that personality variables may be a major factor only in the acquisition of communicative competence. One researcher has suggested that the confused picture *of the research on personality factors can be clarified if a distinction is made between studies that measure* natural communicative ability *and studies that measure* linguistic task language. *Personality variables seem to be consistently related to the former, but not to the latter.*

Despite the inconclusive results to date and the problems involved in carrying out research in the area of personality characteristics, many people believe that personality will be shown to have an important influence on success in language learning. This relationship will probably be a complex one, however, in that it is probably not personality alone, but the way in which it combines with other factors that contributes to second language learning.

Part IV: Age

In discussions of individual differences in second language learning, age is the factor which has been most frequently considered. This is not at all surprising when one considers that age, unlike most other learner characteristics, is the most easily measured.

Because we will be discussing the issue of age in more detail later on in this unit, only a very brief summary of the general findings on age and second language learning will be discussed here.

It is almost a universal belief that children learn languages better than adults. This belief is based on countless observations of children from immigrant families who learn the language of a new community with native-like fluency, whereas the parents rarely achieve such high levels of competence. The most common explanation for these observations is that there is a critical period *for learning languages during which the brain is flexible and therefore permits language learning to occur easily. Since this period is thought to end somewhere around puberty, adolescents and adults are no longer able to call upon these natural learning capacities and therefore have to learn languages in a more formal and somewhat artificial manner.*

However, this critical period hypothesis *has been called into serious question in recent years from several different points of view. In terms of the neurological research in this area, it has not been demonstrated that changes take place in the brain at the onset of puberty. Furthermore, there are countless examples of older learners (adolescents and adults) who have reached high levels of proficiency in a second language. One of the difficulties in comparing the second language learning ability of children and adults is that the conditions for language learning are often very different. Younger learners usually have more time, more attention, and more opportunities for communicative use. Interestingly, however, in some studies which have investigated the second language development of older and younger learners in similar circumstances, it has been found that older learners learn more efficiently than younger learners. We will discuss more of the details concerning research on age and second language learning later in this module. We will now return to our* *discussion of the effects of motivation on second language learning and conclude this lecture on individual characteristics.*

Part V: Motivation and Conclusions

Since we have just read about the role of motivation and attitudes in second language learning and discussed a realistic approach motivating learners in Quebec classrooms, we do not need to spend much more time on it here.

A great deal of research investigating the role of attitudes and motivation in second language learning has been carried out and the overall findings indicate that they have a positive influence on second language learning. But, unfortunately, the research can not indicate precisely how motivation affects learning. That is , in studies where high correlations between motivation and language proficiency are found, we know only that there is a relationship between the two — we do not know the direction of this relationship. That is, we do not know whether it is the motivation that produces successful learning or successful learning that enhances motivation. In other words, are learners more highly motivated because they are successful learners or are they successful because they are highly motivated ? Clearly, these relationships are complex and future research will probably demonstrate that it is not motivation alone that determines whether second language learning will be successful, but rather, that a cluster of interrelated factors combine in complex ways to affect success or lack of success in second language learning.

- **Conclusions**

In this text we have looked at the ways in which aptitude, motivation, personality characteristics and age have been found to influence second language learning. We have learned that the study of individual learner variables is not easy and that the results of research are not entirely satisfactory. This is partly because of the lack of a clear definition and measurement of the individual characteristics. It is also due to the fact that these learner characteristics are not independent of each other. At several points in this lecture, it was pointed out that these learner variables interact in complex ways. So far, researchers know very little about the nature of these complex interactions. Therefore, we are still very far away from making precise predictions about how a particular individual's characteristics will permit us to predict whether he or she will be a successful second language learner.

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Individual Differences

I. How research on individual characteristics is done

Difficulties with this research

II. Intelligence

Aptitude

III. Personality characteristics

IV. Age

V. Motivation

Conclusions

Day	**1**
Activity	**7** ***OPINION POLL ON AGE: BALLOT 1***
Objective	**To focus attention on the age issue in second language acquisition**

Your Opinion

- **Note down some of your ideas at this stage. You will be able to look back later and see if your ideas have changed, and why.**

Day 1

Activity 8 ***Age and Pronunciation***

Objective To demonstrate the relationship between age and pronunciation in second language acquisition

- Listen to the tape of six speakers, some of whom are speaking their first language and some of whom are speaking their second language. Judging by the accent of each speaker (1-6) circle NS if you think he/she is a native speaker, or NNS if you think he/she is speaking his/her second language; if second language, indicate at what age you think he/she started to learn the second language. You may want to look at the scripts of the texts used for this activity. See next page.

1. NS NNS ______

2. NS NNS ______

3. NS NNS ______

4. NS NNS ______

5. NS NNS ______

6. NS NNS ______

CINDERELLA

Once upon a time the wife of a certain rich man fell very ill, and as she felt her end drawing nigh she called her only daughter to her bedside and said, "My dear child, be pious and good, and then the good God will always protect you, and I will look down upon you from heaven and think of you." Soon afterwards she closed her eyes and died. Every day the maiden went to her mother's grave and wept over it, and she continued to be good and pious; but when the winter came, the snow made a white covering over the grave, and in the spring-time, when the sun had withdrawn this covering, the father took to himself another wife.

CENDRILLON

Il était une fois un gentilhomme qui épousa en secondes noces une femme égoïste et fière. Elle avait deux filles qui lui ressemblaient en tous points. Le mari, de son côté, avait une fille aussi bonne que belle. Les noces ne furent pas plus tôt célébrées que la belle-mère laissa éclater sa mauvaise humeur. Elle chargea sa belle-fille des pires besognes et l'envoya coucher dans un grenier, sur une paillasse. La pauvre enfant supportait cela avec courage et, lorsqu'elle avait terminé son ouvrage, elle allait s'asseoir au coin de la cheminée, auprès des cendres, ce qui lui avait valu le surnom de Cendrillon.

Day 1

Activity 9 ***Age: Beyond Pronunciation***

Objective To demonstrate the relationship between age and aspects of second language acquisition other then pronunciation

- **Preview the following study questions before reading the text. Return to them after you have read the text carefully and answer them in the space provided.**

Study Questions

1. What makes Patkowski's (1980) study different from most of the others which have studied the effect of age of acquisition on second language development?

2. Did Patkowski expect age of acquisition to make a difference in the acquisition of syntax?

3. What special factor does Patkowski believe is responsible for the fact that post-puberty learners show a variety of levels of proficiency in second language acquisition while pre-puberty learners are almost all highly proficient?

4. The pre-puberty group probably received more hours of classroom instruction in their second language acquisition than the post-puberty group. How do we know that this factor is not responsible for their higher scores?

5. What did Patkowski conclude about a genetically-based sensitive period for second language acquisition?

The Patkowski Study

Most studies which have investigated the relation of age acquisition with second language development have focused on the attainment of the phonological system, and most have concluded that age of acquisition is a strong predictor of accent. But what of the other linguistic features of language development? Is syntactic development, for example, as dependent on age of acquisition as phonological development? Do older learners ever achieve native-like mastery of word order and sentence structure?

Mark Patkowski (1980), at City University of New York, studied the effect of age on the acquisition of syntax in a second language. Patkowski hypothesized that only those who began learning their second language before the age of fifteen could ever achieve full, native-like acquisition of syntax in that language. He predicted that adult second language learners would achieve total native fluency.

Sixty-seven highly educated and professional U.S. immigrants who had started to learn English at various ages were tested for syntactic proficiency in English. Fifteen native-born Americans were also tested to provide a control group and evidence concerning the validity of the research procedures.

Five-minute samples of taped interviews were transcribed and rated by trained native-speaker judges. Age at beginning of second language acquisition was the main variable being tested but three other variables were also studied and controlled for: 1) years in the U.S., 2) informal exposure to English, and 3) formal English as a second language instruction.

The results were quite revealing. On a scale of zero to five, where zero represented zero mastery and five represented native-like mastery, 32 out of 33 pre-puberty learners scored at the 4+ or the 5 level, whereas the vast majority of the post-puberty learners centered around the 3+ level. In other words, the curve for the pre-puberty learners was strongly skewed to the right (high proficiency) while the score for the post-puberty learners was "normally" distributed. This normal curve for the post-puberty group suggests the usual range of abilities found for performance on a variety of skills. The unbalanced distribution for the pre-puberty group, on the other hand, suggests that some special factor is at work. Moreover, when interactions with the other three variables were tested and controlled for, this strong relationship between age at which second language learning is begun and syntactic rating was upheld. In other

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Patkowski, M.S. (1980). "The Sensitive Period for the Acquisition of Syntax in a Second Language", *Language Learning*, 30, no. 2, December 1980.

words, a person who had arrived in the U.S. at the age of eighteen and had lived there for twenty years did not score significantly better than someone who had arrived at the age of eighteen but had only lived there for nine years. Similarly, amount of instruction did not correlate with success to the extent that age did.

Thus, Patkowski found that the age of acquisition is a limiting factor in the acquisition of syntax in a second language. His results were highly consistent with the hypothesis that there is a genetically-based sensitive period for second language acquisition.

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Day 1

Activity 10 ***Beyond Age***

Objective To illustrate that age is not a sufficient predictor of second language learning success

Notes:

Day 1

Activity 11 ***Age, Rate of Learning and Ultimate Success in Second Language Acquisition***

Objective To illustrate that older learners proceed through the early stages of language acquisition more rapidly

Reference Snow, Catherine and Marian Hoefnagel-Höhle (1978). The Critical Period for Language Acquisition: Evidence from Second Language Learning. Child Development, 1948. 49,114-128

- Mark an X for the group you think did best at the beginning of the year (rate) on each test, and Y for the group you think did best at the end of the year (eventual attainment).

TASK / AGE	3-10 CHILD	12-15 ADOLESCENT	ADULT
Pronunciation			
Auditory Discrimination			
Morphology			
Sentence Repetition			
Sentence Translation			
Sentence Judgment			
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test			
Story comprehension			
Storytelling			

Summary of Results and Conclusions

Results

- Adolescents and adults learned faster than children in the first few months of exposure to Dutch
- By the end of the first year, the children were rapidly catching up to the adults, and had ever surpassed the adults on some measures
- The adolescents retained the highest levels of performance, and had an advantage over the younger children in the rule-governed aspects of language
- No age group achieved native-like eventual attainment, and no age group achieved native-like pronunciation

Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle's Conclusion

- Results provide evidence that there is no "critical period" for language acquisition

Other Conclusions which are Compatible with the Evidence

- Some of the texts, for example, sentence judgement or translation, were too hard for young learners. They were simply beyond the children's cognitive capacities
- While adults and adolescents learn faster in the early stages of second language development, young children eventually catch up and even surpass them if their exposure to the language takes place in contexts where they are surrounded by the language on a daily basis. In other words, adults and adolescents learn at a faster RATE, while children surpass adults and adolescents in EVENTUAL ATTAINMENT
- Adults and adolescents can make considerable and rapid progress toward mastery of a second language in contexts of daily use of that language in social, personal and professional or academic interaction

Day 1

Activity 12 ***Opinion Poll on Age: Ballot 2***

Objective To examine the extent to which participants' opinions have been affected by the afternoon's discussion

Your Opinion

- Check back to activity 7. Have you altered your opinion? Why or why not?

Day	1	
Activity	13	***Summary: Age and Other Factors***
Objective	To consolidate age issue and to arrive at an answer to the question: *IS IT BETTER TO START L2 INSTRUCTION IN GRADE 1, GRADE 4 OR SECONDARY 1?*	

Notes:

- Please note down any comments or reactions.

THEORIES OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

DAY 2

Objectives of Day 2

- ***To become familiar with processes and strategies operating in both "natural" and "classroom" language acquisition (e.g. generalization, imitation, etc.), and with the characteristics of both the "natural" and the classroom environments (e.g. input, interaction, time factors, feedback on error, etc.)***
- ***To distinguish between input (language available in the environment and intake (the input which the learner is willing and able to receive)***
- ***To become familiar with the theories of language learning, their evolution and their relation to language teaching methods***

At the end of the session, you will:

- understand the internal processes at work in language acquisition
- discover some of the principles of three major types of theory of language acquisition
- point out weaknesses in the behaviorist theory as a complete explanation of language acquisition
- appreciate some of the similarities and differences between first and second language learning
- see the influence of language acquisition theory on materials, methodologies and classroom practices.

Table of Activities: Day 2

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* This indicates that an alternative procedure is provided.

Day	2	
Activity	1	***How do they do it?***
Objectives	• To establish link between the internal processes at work in language acquisition (Day 1) and the theories which take into account both internal processes and external characteristics of the learning environment • To introduce the three major types of theories of language acquisition	

- The following are some of the common processes known to operate in language learning. After you have become familiar with the definitions and examples, turn to the worksheet and data sets which begin on page

Processes and Examples

IMITATION: Word-for-word repetition of an utterance

Mother: Would you like some bread and peanut butter?
Katie: Some bread and peanut butter.

PRACTISING: Repetitive manipulation of form

Michel: I can handle it. Hannah can handle it. We can handle it.

OVERGENERALIZATION: Sensing a new rule and then overgeneralizing it to new and inappropriate contexts.

Mother: Alanna, sit up.
Alanna: I sitted up already.

SIMPLIFICATION: Simplifying a structure by leaving off an idiosyncratic or irregular feature.

Chelsea: My daddy take the train to work everyday.

CREATIVE USE OF VOCABULARY: Misuse of vocabulary due to incomplete mastery of the full meaning of the word in question.

Michel: I get it first because I'm the guest.
Mother: What does guest mean?
Michel: It means the one who wants it first!

Data set

I: Peter
Peter (24 months) is playing with a dump truck while two adults look on.
Peter: (finding a car) *"Get more."*
Lois: *You're gonna put more wheels in the dump truck?*
Peter: *dump truck / wheels / dump truck*
Patsy: *What happened to it?* (the truck)
Peter: (looking under chair for it) *hm / lose it / dump truck! dump truck! fall! fall!*
Lois: *Yes, the dump truck fell down.*
Peter: *dump truck fell down / dump truck*
(later)
Patsy: *I's yucky outside, strictly yucky*
Peter: *yucky / yucky*
Patsy: *yucky*
Peter: (...)
Patsy: *I'm gonna take these and put them back on the little car,*
ok?
Peter: *Put them back / ok /*

Peter (25 months) playing with pencil and paper
Patsy: *Now you're going to write. What're you going to write?*
Peter: *car / a car / make a car?*
Lois: *Make a what? a car?*
Peter: *ha ha*
Lois: *Want me to make a car?*
Peter: *car ... make a ...*
Lois: *Oh. I'll make a car. There's a car*
Peter: *Here's a car*
Lois: *Mm hm*
Peter: *Ok / make / make / me make a car too!*

(Peter indicating he wants Patsy to draw)
Peter: *Lois / Lois too / Patsy / Lois too!*
Patsy: *You want me to make a car? OK*

(Patsy draws tiny car like Lois's)
Patsy: *Oh, you want Lois to have some paper?*
Peter: *Lois have some paper?*
(later)
Patsy: *Let's see if I can draw what you draw. Draw something!*
Peter: *draw something!*

Set 1: Peter

II: Cindy

Cindy (24 months, 16 days, looking at a picture of a carrot in a book and trying to get Patsy's attention): kawo? kawo? kawo? kawo?

Patsy: *What are the rabbits eating?*

Cindy: *They eating ... hando?*

Patsy: *No, that's a carrot.*

Cindy: *Carrot (pointing to each carrot on the page) the other ... carrot, the other carrot, the other carrot*

(a few minutes later, Cindy brings Patsy a stuffed toy rabbit)

Patsy: *What does this rabbit like to eat?*

Cindy: *(...) eat the carrots*

(Cindy gets another stuffed rabbit)

Cindy: *He (...) eat carrots. The other one eat carrots. They both eat carrots.*

Cindy: (One week later, Cindy opens the book to the same page.) *Here's the carrots* (pointing) *Is that a carrot?*

Patsy: *Yes.*

Cindy (25 months, 1 day, playing with several dolls, one of which she calls a tiger): *Doll go to sleep.*

Patsy: *Does the doll want to go to sleep?*

Cindy (not answering Patsy, but talking to dolls in "motherly" tones): *Okay, I take you. Come on, Doll ... (...) go to sleep with the tiger. (...) go to sleep. Doll wants to go to sleep.*

Patsy: *Does the tiger want to go to sleep?*

Cindy: *Tiger wants to go to sleep. The doll wants to go to sleep. He go to sleep.*

Cindy (25 months, 1 day, looking out the window): *Look at the grass.* - (holding a little wooden bird and pointing him to "look" out the window): *I show the bird the grass.* (turning the bird to "look" at Patsy): *I show the bird Patsy … I show the bird … I show the bird …*

Patsy: *What are you showing the bird?*

Cindy: *the grass.*

Set 2: Cindy

III: Various children (Note: The ages of children older than two and a half are shown in years and months, e.g., 6, 10 means six years and ten months.)

1. Kyo: (6,10): *I'm hungry.*
   Dad: *We'll have some poppy seed bread in a little while.*
   Kyo: *No. I want it now.*
   Dad: *We have to wait' til it's defrosted.*
   Kyo: *But I like it frossed.*
   Michel (2,11): *Yeah. I like it frossed.*
2. Randall (3 yrs) had a little bump on his hand and his mother said that they'd have to take him to the doctor.
   Randall: *Why? So he can doc my little bump?*
3. Lucy (13): *What were you saying about me?*
   David (Lucy's brother, 6, 9): *Oh, I was just talking about behavements.*
4. Michel (2,10): *Mummy, I'm hiccing up and I can't stop.*
5. Randall (6.2) and David were discussing weapons, specifically scissors:
   Randall: *Lucy's is good for dagging inside things. She can dag inside a wall.*
6. Mother: *Get undressed* (after many repetitions)
   David (3,11): *I'm getting undressed.*
   I'm getting on dressed.
   I'm getting on dressed.
   I'm getting off dressed.
7. David (4,4): *It was upside down but I turned it upside right.*

Set 3: Various Children

8. When Kyo (2,11), who had been a vegetarian since birth, was offered a piece of chicken, he replied: *No. I don't like chicken … I don't eat dead animals. I eat … dead … salad !*

9. Michel (2,9), who had been a vegetarian up until the age of two and a half, was watching his mother carve a turkey for the first time. He peered inside the cavity of the turkey where a whole onion had been cooked, and said *Oh look! A turkey pit !*

10. At Lucy's 12th birthday, toasts were proposed with grape juice in stemmed glasses:

Father: *I'd like to propose a toast.*

After a long period without toasts, David (5 years, 1 month) raised his glass and said *I'd like to propose a piece of bread*. Only after all the laughter sent David slinking from the table did the group realize that he wasn't joking!

11. David (2,9): *Daddy turned on the window* (when Daddy opened the window shade and let in the light).

12. Mother: *I love you to pieces.*

    David(4,1): *I love you three pieces.*

Set 3: Various Children (continued)

13. Randall (2, 10): *You took all the towels away because I can't dry my hands.*

14. Randall (2, 10): *Are dogs can wiggle their tails?*

Set 3: Various Children (continued)

- Read the following brief introduction to the theories of language acquisition

Theories of Language Acquisition

The ***Behaviorists*** *posit that language learning is simply a matter of imitation and habit formation. They claim that it is a stimulus/response process and regardless of the quality and quantity of input, all normal human beings will imitate and ultimately acquire the full-blown system.*

The ***Innatists*** *claim that all human beings are equipped with a language learning capability which, if stimulated at the appropriate time, will lead to language acquisition. Noam Chomsky, the most famous of the innatists, claimed that the language that a child is exposed to is often ungrammatical and never contains sufficient numbers of examples of the complex language structures which any normal child eventually* knows. *According to his theory, the language acquisition device (LAD) is capable of using minimal input in discovering the rules of the adult language.*

The ***Interactionists'*** *position is that language develops as a result of the complex interplay between a distinctly human predisposition and the environment which the individual is exposed to. Unlike the innatists, the interactionists claim that the language of the environment is frequently modified to suit the capability of the learner, and that this modification, which is intuitively made to help the child understand what is said, is a crucial element in the language acquisition process.*

Day	2	
Activity	2	***Language Acquisition Under Abnormal Circumstances: Case Studies***
Objectives	• To focus on the factors at work in language acquisition • To discover some of the principles governing language acquisition and to show evidence against a simple behaviorist position	

- The following case studies are examples of abnormal language acquisition and provide interesting insights into the process of language acquisition. In your group, read the case study which is assigned to you.

- While reading the case studies, ask yourself what could be responsible for the limited successes. Why has acquisition been incomplete in each case? When you have finished, quietly discuss your responses with your group. Choose one person to tell the whole group about your case study when the workshop leader brings everyone back together.

Case Studies

The following case studies are examples of unusual language acquisition and provide interesting insights into the process of language acquisition.

Case Study 1: L'enfant sauvage

In 1799, a boy of approximately 12 years of age was found wandering naked in the woods of Aveyron in France. Upon capture, he was found to be completely wild, having had no contact with humankind. A young doctor, Jean-Marc-Gaspard Itard refused to believe what other authorities concluded, that «Victor» was, and had probably been abandoned because he was, an incurable idiot. Itard believed that his subnormality was a result of the fact that he had had no intercourse with other human beings. Although Itard lived long before 20th Century behavioral psychologists proposed a theory of language learning through a system of imitation, rewards and punishments, he believed that, among other things, Victor could be led to speech by "inducing the exercise of imitation through the imperious law of necessity" (p.11). Itard devoted five years to the task of civilizing Victor and teaching him language.

Although Itard succeeded to varying extents in developing Victor's sociability, memory, judgement and all the functions of his senses, his most disappointing results were in Victor's language development. He remained unreceptive to all sounds other than those which had meaning for him in the forest, for example, the cracking of a nut, animal sounds, the sound of rain, etc. He succeeded in learning to read a number of labels and attaching them to objects, but then did not, on his own, transfer the labels to new objects. He even learned to make use of limited writing to express his wants. But he only succeeded in speaking two words, his favorite food lait *and his governess's frequent exclamation "O Dieu!" Moreover, his use of* lait *was only uttered as an excited exclamation at the sight of a glass of milk. He could not be brought to call for the one object he was capable of naming. Even when Itard deprived Victor of milk in hopes of making him call for it, Victor never used the word to communicate his need.*

After a full year of intensive work on Victor's speech development, Itard finally gave up and concluded that "imitation is used in learning to speak only during earliest childhood". (p. 85)

Clearly, Itard's mistake was to believe that environment could accomplish everything. What he eventually came to admit was that the environment has its optimal effect *when applied at the right time, according to the built-in biological clock. This is especially true in regard to language development.*

Case Study 2: Genie

Genie was discovered in 1970, a 13-1/2-year-old girl who had been almost completely isolated, deprived, neglected and abused since the age of 20 months. Because of the irrational demands of a disturbed father and the submission and fear of an abused mother, Genie had spent more than eleven years tied to a chair or a crib in a small, darkened room. Her father had forbidden his wife and son to speak to her and had himself only growled and barked at her. She was beaten every time she vocalized or made any kind of noise, and she had long since resorted to complete silence. Genie was unsocialized, primitive, and undeveloped physically, emotionally and intellectually. Needless to say, Genie had no language.

Since then, Genie has been rehabilitated and educated in the most natural surroundings possible, and to the fullest extent possible. After a brief period in a rehabilitation centre, Genie lived in a normal, loving foster home and attended special schools. Although far from being normal *Genie made remarkable progress in becoming socialized and cognitively aware. She developed deep personal relationships and strong individual tastes and traits. But despite the «natural» environment for language acquisition, Genie's language development has not paralleled normal first language development. In fact, it is far from normal.*

After five years of rehabilitation, a period during which a normal child would have acquired a full-blown language system, Genie's language contained many of the features of abnormal language development. These include a larger than normal disparity between comprehension and production; abnormal variability in rule application; a retarded rate of development; overuse of stereotypic speech; and absence of specific syntactic forms and mechanisms always present in normal grammatical development.

In sum, her language shares the features of language development exhibited by adults with brain damage in the left (language) hemisphere of the brain and who have had to re-learn language in adulthood, by children in the earliest stage of language acquisition, and by chimps attempting to learn language.

Genie's case is tragic instance of deprivation during the so-called critical period. *It is the most carefully documented and tested case allowing linguists to study the hypotheses regarding critical periods and appropriate stimulation. And what it seems to indicate is that environment alone is insufficient to accomplish normal language acquisition. Again, it can be concluded that environment has its optimal effect when applied at the right time, according to the built-in biological clock.*

Case Study 3: Research in Primate Language Acquisition

Some researchers claim that humans are not alone in their remarkable use of language. Since the 1950's more and more research is showing that the primates may be capable of learning and manipulating language.

In the early 50's it was thought that of all the primates, chimpanzees were the best equipped intellectually to learn language and so the early research centered on chimps only. The initial results were quite discouraging, however. One chimp managed a spoken vocabulary of four words and that was it. Researchers were forced to concede that chimps could not be taught to talk. But when Beatrice and Allen Gardner observed that chimps in the wild communicate with hand signals, failure turned to success. They decided to teach their first pupil, a one-year-old chimp named Washoe, the gestural language for the deaf, American Sign Language (Ameslan). Within one year and with a vocabulary of ten words, Washoe started to combine signs. She had been taught more *in the context of* more tickling *and then transferred this use to other activities and objects. She invented* gimme tickle *and* open food drink *to request that the refrigerator be opened. (Fleming, 1974)*

Many other chimps since Washoe have been taught in similar ways and with similar results. Some even began their training as early as one month. Living in fully-equipped stimulus-rich environments with minimal restraint, constant human companionship, plenty of opportunity for games and interaction, and intensive training, they have all learned some form of communication through symbols. Techniques have varied but the results have been quite consistent. While Washoe learned to sign through imitation and prompting, Sarah *earned through conditioning techniques.* Salome *even had a human* sister *of the same age and human* parents.

Moreover, while it had been thought that only chimps were capable of language, over a six-year period in the 1970's, a researcher named Francine Patterson managed to bring a gorilla Koko to achieve a vocabulary of 375 signs. In the October 1978 issue of National Geographic, Patterson reported that Koko had learned to respond to and ask questions, to indicate when she felt happy or sad *and to refer to past and future events. Apparently she even insulted people and lied on occasion.*

If all of this is true, then what of the innatist claim that only humans have an in-built capacity for learning language ? The fact is that not all primate researchers have reached the same startling conclusions and some even question the validity of the Gardners' and others' claims (Seidenberg & Petitto, 1981; Terrace, 1980). Aside from those who criticize the experiments themselves as not being sufficiently well-controlled (Seidenberg & Petitto, 1981), many animal psychologists, linguists and psycholinguists question whether primates actually use *the language in the same way that humans do (Savage-Rumbaugh, 1981). Terrace questions whether we can assume that sequences of words are sentences as opposed to rote-learned strings of words. He also questions whether apes ever come to understand the meanings of the elements or the* *relationships between the elements, as children do. And finally, Terrace doesn't believe that any of the apes' sentences are truly rule-governed in the way that human children's sentences are.*

In a tightly controlled study on a chimp named Nim Chimpsky *(a word play on the name of linguist Noam Chomsky, the most famous of the* innatists*), Terrace (1980) compared Nim's use of language to that of a child and found important differences. Unlike utterances in child language, Nim's utterances did not increase in length with time, despite his growing vocabulary. And his longer utterances were extremely redundant: "give orange me give eat orange me eat orange give me eat orange give me you" (p. 101). Additionally whereas a child's utterances become increasingly more complex semantically as they grow longer, Nim's longer utterances overlapped to a very large extent with his shorter utterances. But most importantly, Terrace found, through a series of videotaped sessions of Nim and his teachers, that on a social level Nim's conversations were very different from a child's conversation. It was found that only 12% of Nim's utterances were spontaneous, that is , not preceded by a teacher's prompt, whereas for a normal child, the percentage would be much higher. What is significant is that while children frequently talk independently, just for the sake of talking, 88% of Nim's utterances were in response to prompts. His utterances were also much less creative, having more imitations and fewer expansions (of teachers' utterances) than a child's utterances. Nim also interrupted more frequently and showed no awareness of turn-taking.*

All this aside, however, what is striking is that after four to six years of natural exposure to a language a child achieves near mastery of all aspects of the language. After four to six years of natural exposure plus daily intensive training in a language, a chimp achieves — at best — a vocabulary of a few hundred words about a limited range of topics (mostly food and fun activities) with a rudimentary (if any) mastery of the syntactic system. For the most part, apes sign in response to prompts, or to obtain certain objects or activities. The question is: is this very different from the chicken who learns to depress a lever in order to receive grain?

* * *

Day	2	
Activity	3	***The Innatist Position***
Objective	To make clear the biological foundations of the innatist position	

- Read the following exerpt from Shakespeare's *Richard II* and comment on Thomas Mowbray's reaction to this exile.

Shakespeare's View of the Critical Period

King Richard II has just banished Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, telling him he may never return to England from his exile. Mowbray replies:

> *"The language I have learn'd these forty years,*
> *My native English, now I must forgo;*
> *And now my tongue's use is to me no more*
> *Than an unstringed viol or a harp,*
> *Or like a cunning instrument cas'd up,*
> *Or, being open, put into his hands*
> *That knows no touch to tune the harmony.*
> *Within my mouth you have engaol'd my tongue,*
> *Doubly portcullis'd with my teeth and lips;*
> *And dull unfeeling barren ignorance*
> *Is made my gaoler to attend on me.*
> *I am too old to fawn upon a nurse,*
> *Too far in years to be a pupil now.*
> *What is thy sentence then but speechless death,*
> *Which robs my tongue from breathing native breath ?"*

Richard II, Act I, Scene III

Notes: ______________________________

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Summary of the Innatist Position Text

The innatist position *is that children are born with an innate ability to discover the underlying rules of a language system. Noam Chomsky, the most famous of the* innatists, *proposed this theory in reaction to the behaviourist theory of language acquisition.*

Eric Lenneberg, another famous innatist, *argued that the language acquisition device works successfully only when it is stimulated at the right time — a time which is referred to as the critical period.*

Two versions of the critical period hypothesis: *The strong version is that a child must acquire a first language by puberty or he or she will never be able to learn from subsequent exposure.* (L'enfant sauvage). *The weak version is that language learning will be more difficult and incomplete after puberty.* (Genie).

Plasticity or lateralization theory; *There is much neurological evidence that each of the two hemispheres of the brain has particular strengths that the other does not have, and that the left hemisphere is largely responsible for language. There is also evidence that the child's brain is more plastic and flexible compared with the adult's brain. If one side of a child's brain is damaged, the other side can compensate and take over for any functions lost. There is evidence that at puberty, the process of firmly establishing a particular function to a particular hemisphere takes place, and the human brain becomes less adaptable for language learning.*

Conclusion: *There seems to be considerable biological evidence to support the weak version of the critical period hypothesis. However, while there may be a critical period for the establishment of oral skills, there may not be a critical period for the development of other aspects of language. There may be a series of critical periods for different aspects of language. What is clear, however, is that biological factors are not enough to explain language learning. The environment seems to be involved in a complex interaction with the biological mechanisms.*

The Innatist Position

One of the most fascinating aspects of human development is the ability to learn how to speak. We all watch and listen with absolute fascination as the first coos and gurgles, sounding very much like conversation, are uttered by a six-month old baby. Around the time a child reaches one year old, entire rooms have been known to be silenced when a child first utters the words "bye bye", or "mamma". Indeed, learning a language is an amazing feat — one which has attracted the attention of linguists and psychologists for generations. The crucial question is — how do children accomplish this ? What is it that enables a child not only to learn words, but to put them together in meaningful sentences ? What resources does a child have which enable him or her to do this ?

In this module, we will discuss several proposals which have been offered as explanations of how language is learned. However, this reading will focus our attention on a particular theory of language learning — one which claims that there is a biologically critical period during which it is easiest to learn language. This theory has its roots in linguistics, biology and neurolinguistics. Our discussion of the critical period hypothesis begins with the work of the linguist, Noam Chomsky. He claims that children are biologically programmed for language — that they are born with the ability to learn language. This is known as the innatist theory. Chomsky developed his theory in reaction to the behaviourist theory of learning which claims that children learn language through a process of habit formation — that they imitate the sounds and patterns which they hear around them, receive positive reinforcement for doing so and continue to seek this positive reinforcement by repeating these sounds and patterns until they become habits.

Chomsky attacked the behaviourist theory on the grounds that it failed to recognize the active contribution of the child in the learning process. He argued that the language the child is exposed to in the environment is full of confusing information (e.g. false starts, incomplete sentences, slips of the tongue etc.) and that it does not provide all the information which the child eventually has. He argued strongly that children's minds are not blank slates, to be filled by merely imitating language they hear in the environment. Instead, he claimed that children are born with a special ability to discover for themselves the underlying rules of a language system. According to his theory, this special ability is contained in a language acquisition device. This device is often described as an imaginary black box *which exists somewhere in the brain. In this* black box *are some of the* universal *features which are found in all known languages, for example, information about word order and basic grammatical relations. For the language acquisition device to work, the child needs access to language data. However, this serves only as a trigger to activate the device. Once it is activated, the child is able to discover the rules of the language he or she is learning by matching his or her innate knowledge of basic grammatical relationships to the structures of the particular language being learned.*

Another famous scholar, Eric Lenneberg, working within the field of biology, compared learning to talk with learning to walk. Children who, for medical reasons, cannot move about when infants may soon stand and walk if their problems are corrected at the age of a year or so. Similarly, children who can hear but who cannot speak can nevertheless learn language, understanding even complex sentences. Lenneberg went on to observe that there was evidence that this ability to develop normal behaviours and knowledge in spite of certain types of environmental deprivation does not continue indefinitely and that children who have never learned language (because of deafness or extreme isolation) cannot return to normal if these environmental abnormalities go on for too long. He argued that the "language acquisition device", like other biological functions, works successfully only when it is stimulated at the right time — a time which is referred to as the "critical period".

There are two versions of the critical period hypothesis. The strong version is that children must acquire a first language by puberty or they will never be able to learn from subsequent exposure. The weak version is that language learning will be more difficult and incomplete after puberty. Although there are some who still support the strong version of the critical period hypothesis, most researchers maintain the weak version.

The cases of Genie and Victor are relevant to the discussion of the critical period hypothesis. As we learned in our reading in the previous activity, Genie and Victor made some remarkable steps in social behaviour. However, Victor never learned to speak while Genie remained limited in her use of language and in her control of more complex language forms. Genie's case seems to support a weak version of the critical period hypothesis. And Victor's case seems to support a strong version. However, these cases do not conclusively support even the weak version of the critical period hypothesis because the unknown circumstances of their early lives makes it very difficult for us to know what other factors might be contributing to their inability to learn language.

Next, some of the neurological evidence which has been used to support the critical period hypothesis will be presented. But first, a summary of the kinds of evidence which have been used to support Chomsky's innatist position is provided below:

1) Virtually all children successfully learn their native language at a time in life when they would not be able to learn anything else so complicated. (Even children with quite limited intellectual functioning learn quite complex language structures).

2) Children successfully master the structure of their native language or dialect in a variety of conditions — some which would be expected to enhance language development (e. g. caring attentive parents who focus on the child's language) and some which might be expected to inhibit it (e. g. abusive or rejecting parents). Children achieve different levels of vocabulary, creativity, social grace etc., but virtually all achieve mastery of the structure of the language spoken around them.

3) The language children are exposed to does not contain examples of all the information which they eventually know.

4) Animals —even the primates — cannot learn to manipulate a symbol system as complicated as the natural language of a three or four-year old human child.

Neurological research and the critical period hypothesis

The critical period hypothesis has also received a great deal of attention in neurolinguistic theory and research. According to the well-known neurolinguist, Wilder Penfield, the child's brain is more plastic compared with that of an adult. After the age of nine, however, «the human brain becomes progressively stiff and rigid for the purposes of language learning.» This process of moving from a plastic-like brain in childhood to a more rigid one at puberty is known as plasticity theory or lateralization theory. But before this is discussed any further, it is important to provide some preliminary information about language and the brain.

The Brain

The brain is a complex organ, consisting of many different parts and performing a variety of complex functions. The two major sections of the brain are the left and right hemispheres. Each hemisphere is thought to have particular strengths that the other does not have. For example, the right hemisphere appears to have a special talent for music and for recognition of complex visual patterns. The left hemisphere appears to have a special analytic ability including language capacities. This does not mean that all functions related to language are located in the left hemisphere and that all functions related to visual processing are in the right hemisphere. On the contrary, there is growing evidence to suggest that both the right and left hemispheres are involved in a wide range of mental processes, but in different ways. If we take language processing as an example, it has been argued that the right hemisphere deals with linguistic input in a holistic and gestalt-like manner, whereas the left hemisphere deals with language input more analytically. Generally speaking, however, there seems to be agreement that each hemisphere has a dominant capacity for certain functions with language primarily located in the left hemisphere.

But how, you many ask, do we know which function is located in which hemisphere? What evidence is there for the claim that the language function is located in the left hemisphere for example ? One source of evidence comes from research with brain damaged individuals. As early as 1861, the well-known neurologist and anthropologist, Paul Broca, showed that a particular speech disorder resulted from damage to a specific area of the left hemisphere. This area of the brain is now known as Broca's area. In fact, all of Broca's patients with speech disorders had left hemisphere damage only. Over the decades, more research with brain damaged individuals has shown that patients who suffer damage in different areas of the left hemisphere are far more likely to experience speech and language disorders than *patients who suffer right hemisphere damage. Results like these provide strong support that for most people, language is a dominant function of the left hemisphere.*

There are several other methods that researchers have used to discover the location of particular language functions in the brain. These studies have not only been done with brain damaged individuals, but with normal *subjects as well. However, it is important to note that although sophisticated techniques for investigating language and the brain are developing all the time, research in this area is still in its infancy. Therefore, the results must be considered as preliminary.*

Now that we have some information about language and the brain, we are ready to continue with the discussion of some of the neurological research which supports the critical period hypothesis. We will recall that the critical period hypothesis states that there are physical changes at puberty which make the brain less adaptable for language learning. This claim is also based mainly on studies of people who have suffered some kind of language loss as a result of brain damage. These studies have found that a child has the remarkable ability of re-learning a language even if the speech areas of the left hemisphere are severely damaged and in some cases removed. However, as we have already learned, adult learners who suffer similar damage to the left hemisphere do not have the same ability to fully recover language. This offers support for the theory that a child's brain is more plastic and flexible — that it is capable of transferring functions from one hemisphere to another if necessary. This also suggests that in childhood, the precise functions of the brain may not yet be fully established in one hemisphere or another. This helps to explain why children with severely damaged left hemispheres can re-learn language with only the right hemisphere remaining. At puberty, however, the process of firmly establishing a particular function to a particular hemisphere is thought to take place. This process is referred to as lateralization. The theory is that once lateralization is complete, the brain no longer has this flexibility or plasticity *This helps to explain why adults with left hemisphere damage never fully recover their language ability. It is important to point out, however, that there is considerable disagreement about when and how lateralization takes place. There are those who claim lateralization is complete at puberty, others who claim it is fully completed at five years of age. Still others have argued that different aspects of language are lateralized at different times starting from early childhood and going into adulthood.*

So what can we conclude about the critical period hypothesis ? First, there does seem to be considerable biological evidence to support the weak version of the critical period hypothesis stating that first-language learning is more difficult and less complete after puberty. The case of Genie and the others which we have read about have provided some evidence for this. However, because of the peculiar nature of these cases, no firm conclusions can be drawn. In terms of the neurolinguistic evidence, it also seems as if children have an advantage over adults when it comes to recapturing language which is lost through some kind of brain damage. However, these too are *special cases of language learning and there is considerable concern about the lack of precision in conducting research with brain damaged cases. For example, in most brain damaged cases, it is not just one area which is damaged but usually a constellation of other areas as well. Injury in some areas may set off damage in others which is not easily detected. If we consider the evidence for the critical period hypotheses in terms of learners' abilities to learn second languages, younger children do seem more capable of achieving native like competence than adults. However, while there may be a critical period for the establishment of oral skills, like pronunciation, there may not be a critical period for the development of other aspects of language. Or, as some researchers have suggested, there may be a series of critical periods for different aspects of language starting in childhood and continuing for many years. Much more research is needed before an answer to these questions is provided. However, what should be clear from this discussion of the critical period hypothesis is that biological factors are not enough to explain language learning. The environment seems to be involved in a complex interaction with the biological mechanisms. And it is in the nature of this interaction where an answer to the question of how language is learned probably lies.*

❑❑❑

The Innatist Position

Part I

Chomsky's innatist position

Language acquisition device: How it works

Part II

Biological evidence for a critical period

Part III

Language and the brain

Part IV

Neurological evidence for the critical period

Part V

Conclusions

Day	2	
Activity	4	***Out of the Mouths of Babes: Interactionist Approaches?***
Objective		To explore the possibility that neither the behaviorist nor the innatist position is a sufficient explanation for language acquisition, and to become familiar with some of the research findings in child language acquisition

- Preview the following discussion questions before viewing the film, and then return to them after the film for a guide to discussion of the important points made by Peter and Jill DeVilliers.

Discussion Questions

Out of the Mouths of Babes*

1. **Who teaches children to talk?**

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2. **When do children develop the ability to discriminate speech sounds — from other sounds in the environment and from each other?**

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3. **What does the narrator (P. de Villiers) say about language development after puberty?**

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4. **What is a holophrase?**

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* *Film made for CBC's The Nature of Things series by J. de Villiers and P. de Villiers.*

5. What is telegraphic speech?

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6. What are the limitations on a child's ability to imitate language?

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7. Why does a child say *comed* after he had previously used *came* correctly?

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8. How does mothers' speech to young children differ from their speech to older children and adults?

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9. At about what age, according to J. de Villiers, does a child master the major syntactic structures of language, including negatives and interrogatives?

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10. When do parents correct their children's speech? When do they praise what children say?

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11. Describe the "wug test". What is it used to show?

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12. What point is J. de Villiers making when she discusses the child's acquisition of tag questions?

13. How do child language researchers demonstrate that young children have difficulty treating language as an object — apart from the meaning it conveys?

14. What interferes with a child's ability to understand big/little or front/back in the same way as adults?

15. On the basis of the de Villiers' research what can we deduce about the three major theories of language acquisition?

Notes

Day 2

Activity 5 ***Comparing First and Second Language Acquisition***

Objective To become familiar with the differences between first and second language acquisition

- **List some of the characteristics of each group of learners.**

Young/First Language Learners	Older/Second Language Learners

Data

Second Language Learners

Examine the following data sets for evidence of L1 interference and cognitive maturity. In each case, determine if the L1 interference helps or hinders communication and what the cognitive academic ability allows the learner to do.

1.
Teacher (referring to a reading):
Why were the two young men handcuffed together? ... Sylvain...

Sylvain: *Uh, the two men youngs, ... the two ... the two youngs men were handcuffed /aenkuhft/ each other ... the one ... was the sheriff and the other ... one a prisoner.*

Notes

2.
Teacher: *What is the "Star-Spangled Banner"?*

Student: *The song of national in United States.*

Teacher: *Right ... The national anthem of the United States.*

Notes

3. (Working on a dramatization of a story in which one camper disappears in the woods. Teacher is having trouble getting students to inject emotion into their role-playing.)

Teacher: *Simon, you be Mark. Daniel, you be Tom.*

Simon: *Ron's disappeared. What should we do?*—(Reading with no expression)

Teacher: *Oh come on! Your best friend has disappeared ... You say: Ron's disappeared ... What should we do ... Leave him.* (Exaggerated lack of expression)

(Simon reads again with same lack of expression as before)

Teacher: *Isn't this exciting? Oh Oh Oh* (pretends to be yawning) *Alright someone who's more emotional ... Guylaine, what are they talking about?*

Guylaine: *Disparition?*

Teacher: *Disappearance ... of who or what?*

Notes

4.

Teacher: *My boyfriend has fifteen years old ... Nancy?*

Nancy: *It's uh ... correct?*

Teacher: *Gaston?*

Gaston: *is?*

Teacher: *Is fifteen years old ... Why Gaston?*

Gaston: *Because you can't hold fifteen years?*

Teacher: *Right. The expression in English is to be years old. I am fifteen years old. She is twenty years old. It's not have. In French your expression is have but in English the expression is to be. I am five years old.*

Notes

5. (Doing a lesson on forming plurals in Grade 5)

Teacher: *Number one... Jim's boots are brown... Louise?*

Louise: *Brown takes an "s"... It's correct?*

Teacher: *... Who can tell me why brown doesn't take an "s"?*

Student: *Because uh... You have uh... one pairs of boots?*

Teacher: *No, that's not the reason, Luc?*

Luc: *When you have an adjective... we don't put "s"*

Teacher: *Right... in English... we do not accord... or make the agreement between adjectives and nouns.*

Notes

6.

Teacher: *What's the difference between* " to wander" *and* " to wonder"?

Student: "To wonder" *is to ask a person a question... and* " to wander" *is to...uh... to walk nowhere.*

Notes

7.

Teacher: *"Money isn't everything"... What does that expression mean? "Money isn't everything "... Behind the meaning...*

Stephane: *Well, it's means that... uh... it means that they don't, the people who lives there don't think just about money, and they make some more money, and they thinks about something else.*

Notes

Unpublished data from research project titled *Interactions among learners, teachers, texts and methods of English as a Second Language*, directed by Patsy M. Lightbown and Bruce Barkman, and funded by The Office of the Secretary of State of Canada, 1978.

Day	**2**	
Activity	**6**	***Second Language Acquisition Theories***
Objective	To become familiar with the theoretical positions on second language acquisition and their influence on materials, methodologies and classroom practices	

- **The following is a text which summarizes three major theories of second language acquisition. Please note that the most comprehensive creative construction theory is Stephen Krashen's Monitor Model (1977). Thisa model, which is made up of five hypotheses, is included as an illustration of the creative construction theory.**

I. Contrastive Analysis Hypotheis
II. Creative Construction
    A. Krashen's Monitor Model
        1. The Acauisition-Learning Hypothesis
        2. The Monitor Hypothesis
        3. The Natural Order Hypothesis
        4. The Input Hypothesis
        5. The affective Filter Hypothesis

III. Cognitive and Skill-Learning Theories

- **Read each section of the text slowly and carefully. While reading about each of the major theories, consider and discuss how materials, methodologies and classroom activities might have been influenced by each theory. Discussion questions have been provided to guide your discussion.**

Second Language Acquisition Theories

I. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

This model of second language learning is called the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis but it is really part of the behaviorist theory or model of second language learning. The basic supposition is that language development consists of the acquisition of a set of habits; the second language learner starts with the habits associated with his first language grammar. Where there are similarities between the two languages, the learner will learn target language structures with ease; where there are differences, the learner will have difficulty. Errors are seen as first language habits interfering with the acquisition of second language habits and the process of learning the second language is thought to be a matter of overcoming old habits (L1 habits) with new ones (L2 habits). However, we now know that not all errors which are predicted by Contrastive Analysis are made. Furthermore, data analyses have revealed that learners make many errors which are not predictable on the bases of Contrastive Analysis. For example, learners simplify structures in the target language just as children do: She want pudding too. *Finally, the model would predict that where differences exist, errors would go both ways on the same structure:* Le chien a mangé le *and* The dog it ate. *In fact, this is not always the case. Learners sometimes find difficult those things which are very similar but not identical. Contrastive Analysis proved to be inadequate as a predictive measure, and in the last twenty years, a number of other theories have been proposed.*

Discussion Questions

- Name a few classroom activities which seem to be based on the assumptions inherent in this theory.
- If all classroom activities were based on this theory, what would be the implications for the homogeneous (entirely francophone) classroom?
- What would be the implications for the heterogeneous (mixed first languages) classroom?
- Would a methodology based on this theory give all learners equal opportunity or would certain types of learners be advantaged?

II. Creative Construction

A theory or model which has become increasingly popular is that of second language acquisition as a process of creative construction by which a learner constructs internal representations of the language being learned. These representations result from a combination of the learner's internal processing mechanisms and environmental exposure to the second language. Moreover, these internal representations slowly develop in the direction of the full second language system in predictable stages. Most of the evidence for this model has come from the analysis of learners' errors at various points in their second language acquisition and the order or sequence in which certain structures are acquired. What is distinctive about this model is that it posits internal processing strategies which operate on language input without any direct dependence on the learner actually producing the language. That is , the learner need not actually speak or write in order to learn language. According to this model, acquisition takes place internally as the learner reads and hears samples of the language that he can understand. The speech and writing which the learner eventually produces is seen as an outcome of the acquisition rather than as a causal factor. Learners' oral or written production are useful in contributing to SLA only in so far as they allow the learner to participate in communicative situations.

The most comprehensive creative construction theory is Stephen Krashen's Monitor Model (1977).

A. The Monitor Model

Stephen Krashen, is a series of papers and books, has developed an overall theory of second language acquisition which attempts to bring together research findings from a number of diverse areas. Five central hypotheses constitute The Monitor Model, and Krashen claims that research findings from a number of different domains are consistent with the five basic hypotheses. They are: (1) The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis; (2) The Monitor Hypothesis; (3) The Natural Order Hypothesis; (4) The Input Hypothesis; and (5) The Affective Filter Hypothesis. It will be seen that what makes this theory attractive to practitioners is that it seeks to explain everything about SLA; it is intuitively appealing; and it has immediate implications for classroom practice. In fact, Krashen's writing has been very influential in strengthening the recent focus on communicative language teaching *in North America. On the other hand, the theory has also been seriously criticized for failing to meet certain minimum standards necessary in scientific research and writing. Each of the five hypotheses, and its limitation, will be discussed.*

1. The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

According to Krashen, there are two ways for adult second language learners to approach learning a second language: they may acquire *it or they may* learn *it. Essentially, we acquire as we engage in meaningful interaction in the second* *language, much the same way that children pick up their first language — with no attention to form. We* learn, *on the other hand, via a conscious process of study and attention to form and error correction, most typically in formal language classrooms. For Krashen, acquisition is by far the more important process. He asserts that it is only through acquisition that a second language can become natural to the speaker. Further, he asserts that learning cannot turn into acquisition, citing as evidence for this that many speakers are quite competent without ever having learned rules (i. e., they acquired), while other speakers may* know *rules but continue to break them. Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult to detect which system,* acquisition *or* learning, *is at work. To test this hypothesis, each of these abstractions would need to be defined, controlled and manipulated experimentally, and this has not been done.*

Discussion Question

- **What types of activities aim at acquisition? What types of activities aim at learning?**

2.The Monitor Hypothesis

Krashen has been quite specific about how each of the above systems works. The acquired system acts to initiate the speaker's utterances and is responsible for fluency and intuitive judgements about correctness. The learned system, on the other hand, acts only as an editor or monitor, *making changes and polishing what the acquired system has produced. Moreover, Krashen has specified three conditions necessary for monitor use: sufficient time, focus on form, and knowing the rule. Thus, writing is more conducive to monitor use than is speaking, where the focus is on content and not on form. He maintains that knowing the rules only helps the speaker polish what he has acquired via real communication, and that the focus of language teaching should therefore be communication and not rule-learning. The obvious weakness in this hypothesis is that it is very difficult to show evidence of Monitor use. In any given utterance, it is impossible to determine what has been produced by the acquired system and what is the result of Monitor use.*

Discussion Questions

- **If writing is more conducive to monitor use than speaking is, what are the implications for classroom practice and management?**
- **Would the same difference apply to reading and listening? Again, what are the implications.**

3. The Natural Order Hypothesis

This hypothesis states that we acquire the rules of a language in a predictable sequence. Some rules are acquired early while some rules are acquired late; contrary to intuition, the rules which are easiest to state or to learn *are not necessarily the first to be acquired. Krashen points out that the English rule for forming the simple present third person singular— add an* s *— couldn't be easier to learn and yet is very frequently broken. Further, he asserts, the natural order is independent of the order in which rules have been taught (Krashen, 1985). Most of the evidence for this hypothesis comes from the morpheme studies, or studies which examine children's speech for accuracy of certain grammatical morphemes (mostly noun and verb* endings *such as plural -s and past tense -ed in English). In the next unit of this module, we will be looking at* Orders of Second Language Acquisition, *the research findings, the limitations, and the evidence (or lack of it) for Krashen's hypothesis.*

Discussion Question

- **Would this hypothesis predict that we should be ordering or grading a syllabus structurally ?**

4. The Input Hypothesis

Krashen asserts that we acquire language in only one way — by receiving comprehensible input*— by understanding messages. If the input contains forms and structures just beyond the learner's current mastery of the language, then comprehension and acquisition will occur. In other words, if the input is* roughly tuned *to the learner's mastery and needs, then he will progress along the natural order without anyone deliberately teaching the next structure along the continuum. Krashen cites many varied lines of evidence for this hypothesis, most of which appeal to intuition, but which have never been substantiated with real* hard *evidence. In his later writing (1985), Krashen admits that comprehensible input is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for acquisition.*

Discussion Question

- **Is it possible to base a syllabus for a second language classroom on this hypothesis**

5. The Affective Filter Hypothesis

The affective filter *is seen as playing a central role in language acquisition.* Affect *refers to such things as motives, needs, attitudes and emotionals states. The affective filters is an imaginary screen set up by individuals to filter incoming language. A* *learner who is tense, angry, anxious, or bored will screen out input, making it unavailable for acquisition. Thus, depending on the learner's state of mind or disposition, the filter limits what he attends to and what he will acquire. The affective filter determines how quickly the language will be learned. The filter will be up or operating when the learner is stressed, self-conscious or unmotivated. It will be down when the learner is relaxed and intent on integration. It is generally agreed that second language acquisition is very much affected by affective factors.*

In summary, the Monitor Model is the most comprehensive model of second language acquisition yet proposed. In the sense that it attempts to explain a diverse array of phenomena in SLA and thus invites practitioners to test its hypotheses and improve on the theory, it makes a real contribution to the field. Unfortunately, the theory is unclear in places, the terms are vague and the empirical basis is weak.

Discussion Question

- How does the affective filler respond in audiolingual activities? in communicative activities? in teacher-centered activities? in learner-centered activities?

III. Cognitive and Skill-learning Theories

The creative construction model posits language learning independent of productive skills. Theoretically, a person could learn a language without ever uttering a word. However, this is not the assumption underlying most language teaching methodology. When we give learners practice and drill in a language, we assume that this productive activity helps the learners to internalize the structure in question, and to arrive at the point where they can produce it without conscious effort.

The skill-learning model is based on this assumption that productive activity aids language acquisition. Further, this productive activity has both cognitive and behavioral aspects. The cognitive aspect is that which is engaged in the creative construction process — internalizing a representation of the language (grammar, etc.). The behavioral aspect is the automation of that representation.

The essential difference between the creative construction model and the cognitive skills model is that in the latter, learning is a step-by-step assimilation of parts of system and is responsive to conscious guidance and training; learning is result of conscious effort. In creative construction, acquisition is subconscious. Still learning theory asserts that to look at language learning as all conscious or all subconscious is misleading. "Between the most subconscious processes of acquisition at one*

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* **Acquisition** *and* **Learning** *are the two terms which Stephen Krashen uses to make this distinction.*

extreme and the most conscious forms of learning at the other, it would probably be more realistic to think in terms of a continuum, in which subconscious and conscious processes are mingled to varying degrees."(Littlewood, 1984, p.80)

Discussion Question

- **What are the major differences between creative construction theory and cognitive and skills-learning theory?**

Day 2

Activity 7 ***Concluding Remarks***

Objective To review the activities of the day

- Recommended take-home reading

Page 64	*The Innatist Position*
Page 78	Re-read *Second Language Acquisition Theories*

Applied assignment

Over the next few weeks, pay close attention to their own language teaching practices. Focus on a few of the methods, activities, books or materials which they use frequently (both those that work well and those that don't seem to work as well). Ask yourself which theory underlies the design of each. Bring a few samples to the next unit of the module and to be prepared to discuss each in terms of what its underlying principles are and why it seems to work or why it doesn't seem to work.

LEARNER LANGUAGE AND DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES IN "NATURAL" AND CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS

DAY 3

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Objectives of Day 3

- ***To become familiar with the errors and developmental stages which are characteristic of "natural" and classroom learner language***
- ***To become familiar with the internal processes and environmental characteristics believed to contribute to the structure of learner language***

At the end of the session, you will:

- be familiar with the concept of learner language
- be able to differentiate between errors which are the result of learning a first language, and errors which are the result of language development regardless of first language
- understand that errors can be seen as reflecting language learning processes and that they play an important role in the language development process
- be familiar with developmental sequences in "natural" first and second learner language
- be familiar with the differences between "natural" and instructional language learning environments

Day	3	
Activity	1	***Transition From Theories to Learner Language***
Objective	To provide a link between the theories of language learning and the data which illustrate the language learning process	

- Just below, you will find summaries of the major theoretical positions on second language learning. Go over each with your workshop leader.

- Then turn to the next page, where you will find a brief list of materials which have, at one time or another, been used within MEQ programs. Which theory seems to have influenced the design of each of the texts? Can you add materials to the list and say which theory is reflected in each? What about methodologies which you have used, or currently find useful ?

Theories of Second Language Acquisition

Behaviorism: Language learning is simply a matter of imitation and habit formation, replacing old (L1) habits with new (L2) habits; errors are seen as interference from the first language (Contrastive Analysis).

Innatism: All human beings are equipped with a language learning capability which, if stimulated at the appropriate time, will lead to language acquisition. This device is capable of using minimal input in discovering the rules of the target language.

Creative Construction: The learner constructs internal representations of the L2 as a result of the interaction between his or her innate language learning ability and environmental exposure to the L2. Stephen Krashen's Monitor Model is the most comprehensive example of this theory.

Cognitive and Skill-learning Theories: Productive activity, which has both cognitive and behavioral aspects, aids language acquisition. The cognitive aspect is that which is engaged in the creative construction process — internalizing a representation of the language (grammar, etc.). The behavioral aspect is the automation of that representation.

Some Familiar Textbooks

The following textbooks have been used in second language classes for years. Which theory or model(s) of second language acquisition would justify their usefulness?

Elementary	*Jigsaw*	____________________
	Let's Find Out	____________________
	Look, Listen & Learn	____________________
	Sam on Radio 3-2-1	____________________
	Yes ! English For Children	____________________
	Others	____________________
Secondary, Cycle 1	*Connections*	____________________
	Lado English Series	____________________
	Shaping Up	____________________
	Take One/Take Two	____________________
	What's on?	____________________
	Others	____________________
Secondary, Cycle 2	*Alternatives*	____________________
	Challenges	____________________
	Flight 314/Flight 414	____________________
	Lado English Series	____________________
	Special Edition I/ *Special Edition II*	____________________
	Take Action/ Take a Look	____________________
	Ticket to English	____________________
	Others	____________________

Classroom Activities

The following activities have been used in second language classes for years. Which theory or model(s) of second language acquisition would justify their usefulness?

Activity	Justifying Theory

• Singing songs
• Translating sentences
• Memorizing vocabulary lists
• Role play
  • Scripted
  • Unscripted
• Listening to news broadcasts
• Writing to pen pals
• Playing "20 questions"
• Reading comic strips
• Repeating after the teacher or tape recorder
• Learning grammar rules
• Reading stories with dictionary
• Memorizing dialogues
• Conversing with native speakers
• Conversing with each other
• Doing crossword puzzles
• Information gap activities such as puzzle construction mystery solution
• Close tests
• Constructing sentences from scrambled words
• Finding and/or correcting errors in a spoken or written text
• Minimal pair drills
• Studying word formation rules
• Examining sentences for evidence of "interference" errors.	

Day 3

Activity 2 ***The Concept of Learner Language***

Objective To introduce the concept of learner language

- Read the text on the following pages.

The Concept of Learner Language

As we learned in the previous activity on theories of language learning, there really isn't enough evidence for the argument that children learn language through repetition, reinforcement and conditioning. On the contrary, we have seen that a large number of utterances produced by children are not like the kind of utterances produced by children are not like the kind of utterances that adult speakers of the language produce. For example, where would children hear such utterances as: all gone sticky or What the dollie have? Utterances such as these seem to be more easily explained in terms of the child operating his or her own system — a system with its own rules which are not part of the adult code. But how much do we know about this system? What can an utterance like No the sun shining? tell us about the process of learning language?

A number of studies have examined children's language not from the perspective of the adult's linguistic system, but in terms of its own system. These studies have shown how children develop their language until it gradually becomes more like the adult code. One of the first stages which has been described for the early speech of children is called telegraphic. This speech doesn't have many of the small words, like prepositions and articles or inflections (e.g. the -ed *marker for the past tense). It's called telegraphic because this language is very much like the language adults use when sending telegrams, where it's economical to use as few words as possible. Telegraphic speech has different stages. The earliest stage consists of one-word utterances. Later the child starts producing two-word utterances. For example, a child says more page when he or she wants an adult to continue reading, or allgone outside after closing a door.*

Research has also shown that a child's knowledge of the grammatical system is built up in gradual steps. For example, inflections such as the -ing of the present continuous tense or the -ed *of the past tense are not acquired at the same time, but in sequence. Furthermore, it seems that the process of acquiring certain grammatical features follows similar patterns in children across different learning conditions. We will be discussing several aspects of grammatical development later in this module. However, what is important to remember from the discussion so far is that child language is not viewed as an incorrect version of the adult system, but as a system in its own right with its own rules and logic. And as the child continues to receive linguistic input and test his or her hypotheses about how the language system works, he or she is able to revise his or her system in ways which gradually develop towards the system of an adult.*

But what about second language learning? Does it evolve in similar ways? Do second language learners develop their own language system in much the same way that first language learners do? Until the late 60s, most people regarded second language learners' speech as an incorrect version of the target language. Furthermore, this incorrect speech was considered a direct result of interference from the learner's first language. A process known as contrastive analysis was developed to identify differences between the first and second language and to predict areas of potential error. So, for example, one could predict that a speaker of French would be likely to express the idea of being cold as I have cold *in English because of the way this meaning is expressed in his or her first language* J'ai froid. *This notion of interference has a central place in behaviorist accounts of language learning.*

But, as we have already learned, there have been several criticisms of this theory. One of the major attacks comes from a large number of empirical studies which set out to examine learner language in depth. These studies found that the errors produced by second language language learners could not be explained only in terms of first language interference. On the contrary, many of these studies provided evidence that the majority of errors produced by second language learners seemed to be more related to the language being learned and showed a remarkable similarity to the kinds of utterances produced by first language learners.

These findings suggest that second language learners can also be viewed as actively constructing rules from the data they encounter and adapting these rules in the direction of the target-language system. As a result, researchers in second language learning began to take a different approach to analyzing learners errors. This approach, known as error analysis, involves a detailed description and analysis of the kinds of errors second language learners produce in an attempt to discover how learners process language data. This approach differs considerably from contrastive analysis in that it does not set out to predict errors on the basis of interference from the mother tongue. Rather, it seeks to discover and describe the different kinds of errors in an effort to understand how learners are processing the second language data. In this way, error analysis views the speech of second language learners as a system in its own right — one which is rule-governed and systematic and very much like the system of first language learners. This system is referred to as interlanguage *— a system which exists between the first and second language which is continually evolving as learners receive more input and revise their hypotheses about how the second language system works. In the activities which follow, we will look at the different kinds of errors learners produce. We will also look at some of the different ways in which learners' errors have been classified.*

* * *

Day	3	
Activity	3	***Learners' Errors Discovered***
Objective	To discover the difference between errors which are the result of having a particular first language, and errors which are the result of language development regardless of the first language	

Part I

Errors Produced by Native Speakers of French

Work in small groups to decide which of the following learner errors show interference from French.

a) The little boy who erase the board is like Pinocchio.
b) She ate very early her breakfast.
c) Will you make him to stop that ?
d) It's three hour and the school is finish.
e) What that is ? What this is ?
f) Why you don't like me ?
g) He has thirteen years.
h) He pulling the rope.
i) The childrens don't like that.
j) There's two girl and two boy.
k) The house of my mother is big.

Notes

Part II

Errors Produced by Speakers of Other Languages

- Now examine the following errors, which have been made by speakers of first languages other than French and compare these errors to those made by the native speakers of French.

  a. In the morning he wake up and go to school just like all the other boys. (Italian L1)

  b. At day, he has to stay at his desk. (Farsi L1)

  c. I like very much films about war. (Hebrew L1)

  d. How you can see it ? (Arabic L1)

  e. (Comparing country to city) I prefer the country because I can have both side. (Japanese L1)

Notes

Day	2	
Activity	4	***Learners' Errors Classified***
Objective	To demonstrate that errors can be seen as reflecting language learning processes	

- **A number of applied linguists have come up with classifications for the purpose of analyzing L2 errors. The following is one such classification**

Error Classification

1. **Interference**: (interlingual, transfer) errors which are a result of L1 interference; (e. g. , I prefer the book with the cover blue)

2. **Developmental**:(intralingual) errors which are a result of an overgeneralization or a simplification of L2 rules; (e. g. , They wants to speak but they can't)

3. **Transfer of training** (Selinker, 1972): errors which are a result of training; (e.g., She's have everything she wants)

4. **Other**: errors which are not easily identified as one of the other varieties of error; (e. g., train road instead of train tracks)

Error Classification Worksheet

Using the above error analysis classification schema, classify each of the following errors by circling 1,2,3 or 4.

1 = Interference
2 = Developmental
3 = Transfer of training
4 = Other

1.	They rided down the mountain and waited for him.	1	2	3	4
2.	I have twelve years old.	1	2	3	4
3.	He is speaks French.	1	2	3	4
4.	Who can Ted sees ?	1	2	3	4
5.	The bandit stole the toys of Santa.	1	2	3	4
6.	I am going to hockey practice every Monday.	1	2	3	4
7.	The cat was running after two mouses.	1	2	3	4
8.	He's have one brother.	1	2	3	4
9.	The cowboy tries to make the horse go, but the horse doesn't want.	1	2	3	4
10.	I have lived here since three months.	1	2	3	4

Implications: Learner errors are evidence of a developing system.
They are an indication of the learner's ability.
They inform the teacher as to what he or she is ready for.

Notes

Day	3
Activity	5 ***The Significance of Learners' Errors***
Objective	To consolidate the notion that errors play an important role in the language development process

- Preview the following study questions before reading the text. Return to them after you have read the text carefully, and answer in the space provided.

Study Questions

1. What theory of language learning did error analysis give birth to?

2. How do we know that learners don't simply imitate what they hear?

3. What valuable information does a careful examination of learners' errors provide for the language teacher or curriculum developer?

4. What is the difference between non-systematic and systematic errors?

5. What is the significance of learners' errors?

The Significance of Learners' Errors

Errors have traditionally been viewed as the unwanted but inevitable by-product of language learning. In the case of second language learning it was assumed that errors were the result of interference from the habits of the first language; in fact, contrastive analysis grew out this belief. Its aim was to produce an inventory of areas of difficulty for teachers to use in planning their syllabuses. In the field of methodology there were two schools of thought. Some saw errors as evidence of the inadequacy of the current teaching techniques; others thought an analysis would prove useful for the development of techniques for dealing with errors. Out of these two schools of thought came the audiolingual method.

Corder points out that the study of errors has shifted the emphasis away from teaching and onto learning and a consideration of the parallels between first and second language learning. While it is clear that there are differences, it is not entirely clear whether the processes are all that different. The study of errors has led to a questioning of the behaviorist hypothesis and has given birth to the new hypothesis that a human infant is born with an innate predisposition and internal mechanism which allows him or her to construct a grammar from the limited (but essential) language to which he or she is exposed. Corder asserts that if this mechanism is postulated for the first language, it can be assumed to be available for use in the learning of a second language. From this it may be hypothesized that the second language learner has at his or her disposal at least some of the same strategies available to the first language learner.

This does not imply that the course or sequence of learning is the same in both cases. What is significant, however, is that in both cases, errors provide the best evidence of what the learner's knowledge of the language is at any point in its development. We do not regard a child's errors as deviant but rather as evidence that in fact his or her language is developing. If a child's utterance is without error, all we can assume is that he or she has heard the same utterance before and has repeated it. If, on the other hand, he or she makes an error, which reduces the language to a simpler system this is evidence that he or she has a tendency to induce rules.

In the case of second language learning, the study of errors can have similarly interesting implications. Although we can have more knowledge and control of input in the second language classroom, this does not necessarily mean that all input is available for intake. Not all that is presented to a second language learner is available for "going in". The learner himself or herself controls the input, or more precisely, the intake. In other words, input may very well be filtered by his or her innate mechanism, and not by the syllabus itself. For this reason, a careful *examination of learner's errors provides valuable information for the language teacher or curriculum developer. The study of learners' errors may reveal a systematic regularity which could be thought of as a built-in syllabus. (Here it is necessary to distinguish between systematic and non-systematic errors. Non-systematic errors are like those both native and non-native speakers make when they are tired or distracted, and can be better thought of as* **mistakes**. *Systematic errors are errors which the learner makes regularly and which reveal his or her underlying knowledge of the language to date.)*

In sum, a learner's errors provide evidence of the system which he or she is currently using (i. e., the interlanguage). They are significant in three different ways. First, they tell the teacher how much the learner has learned and how far he or she has to go. Second, they provide the researcher with insights into the language acquisition process. Third, and probably most importantly, errors can be seen as a learning device available to the learner. He or she can test hypotheses about the system of the language he or she is learning.

Corder concludes that the more we know about learners' errors, the sooner and better we can adapt language teaching materials and methods to the learners' needs. We'll have more information about what he or she needs, how he or she ought to learn and when he or she ought to learn it.

❑❑❑

Day	3	
Activity	6	***Developmental Sequences***
Objective	To introduce Orders of Acquisition by focussing attention on the order in which Wh-questions are acquired in "natural" first language acquisition	

- The following is a list of wh-question words. Work alone or with a partner to place the wh-question words in order of acquisition, #1 being the earliest acquired, #6 the latest acquired. Your Workshop Leader will then tell you the "right" order

		The right order
why	________	________
what	________	________
how	________	________
where	________	________
who	________	________
when	________	________

Day 3

Activity 7 ***"Natural" First and Second Language Orders of Acquisition***

Objective To become acquainted with the developmental stages of "natural" first and second learner language

Researchers in language acquisition have discovered that languages are acquired in an ordered and somewhat predictable manner, and that this activity will acquaint them with the findings in first and "natural" second language orders of acquisition.

- Organise yourselves into groups of four, and label two members of each group *a* and two members *b*.

The material has been divided into three sections, with three parts each:

Section I
Questions

a) First language
b) "Natural" second language
c) Exercise

Section II
Negatives

a) First language
b) "Natural" second language
c) Discussion

Section III
Morpheme Acquisition

a) First language
b) "Natural" second language
c) Discussion questions

Section I : Questions

The object of the activity is to examine the orders which have been found for the two groups of learners (first and "natural" second language learners) and to note the similarities and differences between the two orders.

- *A* members: You are responsible for reading and presenting the findings on the orders found for questions in first language acquisition (Section I a).
- *B* members: Read and prepare yourselves to present the findings for "natural" second language orders , and upon hearing the findings for first language, note and point out the similarities and differences between the two orders (Section I b).
- Finally, together do the exercise (c). Your workshop leader will then go over an Answer Key with you.

Section II and III
Negatives and Morpheme Acquisition

- Repeat the procedure for Section I.

Section I: Questions

a) First Language

Read these notes on the stages of first language acquisition and prepare to share these with your parner.

Stage 1

Children start out by producing questions without changing the internal structure of the sentence. With yes/no questions, they simply add rising intonation. With wh-questions, they put a question word at the beginning.

You like this? I have some? Why you caught it?

Stage 2

Gradually, they notice that the structure of questions is different and begin to produce questions such as:

Can I go? Is that mine?

But at this stage they generalize that all questions are formed by putting a verb at the beinning of a sentence. Thus:

Is the teddy is tired? Do I can have a cookie?

Stage 3

Later, children begin to master the use of the inversion and can even add *do* in sentences in which no auxiliary is expressed:

Do you like ice cream?

But at this stage they can either invert or use a question word, but not both. Therefore, we may find inversion in yes/no questions but not in wh-questions:

Can he eat the cookie? Where I can draw them?

Later, the child may combine both operations:

Why can he go out?

However, it may still be beyond his or her ability to carry out a third or fourth operation, making it difficult for him or her to negate the question as well as invert it:

Why he can't go out?

Wh-Questions
What is generally the first wh-question word to be used but it is learned first as a whole (*whatsat?* or *Whatsit?*) and it is some time before the child learns that there are variations of the form, such as *What is that?* and *What are these?*

Where and *who* emerge later, reflecting the fact that the child can only ask what he or she can already answer, questions about the here and now.

Finally, when the child begins to understand causation, time and manner, *why*, *how* and *when* emerge.

Section I: Questions

b) "Natural" Second Language

Read the following notes and prepare to share your findings with your partner.

Stage 1
Learners form their first questions without changing the internal structure of the sentence. With yes/no questions, they simply add rising intonation without changing the word order. With wh-questions, the question word is simply placed at the beginning of the sentence.

You want to see this? Where she is going?

Stage 2
The learner notices the pre-sentential element but doesn't understand where it comes from. He or she overgeneralizes and thinks he or she can simply put a verbal element at the beginning of all yes/no questions:

Is the door is open or closed? Do you can write this?

Stage 3
The use of inversion is more wide-spread and becomes regularized. However, learners will sometimes inflect the verb twice:

Where did he bought it? What does he says?

Section 1C: Exercise

Stages of Question Development for "Natural" Second Language Learners

Read these questions produced by Grade 6 learners. These children are currently part of an intensive English program during which they have ESL all day, 5 days a week, for 5 months. See if you can identify which stage of second language question development each question fits into. Some of the questions may fit equally well into two stages, due to the way in which the stages overlap. Nevertheless, this exercise should sensitize you to your own students' question development.

Learner 1

1. *Uh how many, how many uh children are there...*
2. *Is the girl have um-, the-, hair long?...*
3. *Um uh is there-, a girl on the bike or a boy?...*
4. *What colour is the um the hair of the girl who is do um uh skate um uh artistic?...*

Learner 2

5. *... does the book is open or close?...*
6. *It's a girl?...*
7. *Does the girl it's uh beside the bicyle or on the bicycle?...*

Learner 3

8. *How many people on the beside of the-, uh ice, beside the ice-, is drink the coffee?...*
9. *Uh what colour is her hair?...*
10. *Uh, you don't see a little girl with her Dad?...*
11. ...it's a boy beside the bicycle-, or on the bicycle?...
12. The little gi, the little girl is making an airplane?...

Discussion Question

If children learning their first language acquire the wh-questions in an order which reflect their cognitive development, how do you think a child learning his or her second language under "natural" conditions would acquire the wh-questions? How do you think and adult learning his or her second language under "natural" conditions would acquire the wh-questions?

Section II: Negatives

a) First Language

Children learn the *functions* of negation very early. For example, they learn to deny, reject, disagree with and refuse something by using the negative without too much trouble. However, even though they have this awareness of how negation functions, it takes some time before they have learned the *grammatical rules* to express the variety of negative functions.

Stage 1

The child's first negatives usually consist of the word *no* which is simply tagged onto a word or phrase, either at the beginning or at the end.

No go. No cookie. No mommy comb hair.

Some children even adopt the word *any* as a negator.

Any bath!

Stage 2

At this stage, the negative element is inserted into a more complex sentence. At this stage, children may add forms of the negative other than *no*. However, they do not yet inflect these for different persons or tenses:

I can't do it. He don't want it.

Stage 3

Later, children begin to produce the correct form of the verbs *do*, *be* and modal verbs such as *can* to suit the person, number and tense.

You can't have supper. She doesn't want it.

Section II: Negatives

b) Natural Second Language

Stage 1

The negative elements (usually *no* or *not*) is typically placed before the verb or the element being negated.

No bicycle. No have any sand. I not like it.

No is preferred by some learners, perhaps due to transfer from their first language. Spanish speakers prefer *no* since it corresponds with the negative form in Spanish

Stage 2

At this stage, *no* and *not* are dominated by *don't*. However, *don't* is not marked for person, number or tense and it may even be used before modals like *can* and *should*.

He don't like it. I don't can sing.

Stage 3

Learners begin to place the negative element after auxiliary verbs like *are*, *is*, *can*, etc. But at this stage, the *don't* form is still not fully analysed.

You can't go there. He can't eat nothing.

Stage 4

Do performs its full function as a marker of tense and person.

It doesn't work. We didn't have supper.

For some time, however, learners may continue to mark tense on both the auxiliary and the verb.

I didn't went there. She doesn't wants to go.

Section II

c) Discussion Questions

1. How is the negative expressed in French? Consider both placement and form.

2. Do you think this will influence the learning of the negative in English?

3. What kinds of negative constructions would you expect in the English spoken by francophones?

Section III: Morpheme Acquisition

a) First language

Much research has focussed on how children develop the use of inflections and function words, like the third person singular *-s*, or the past tense *-ed* or the articles *a* and *the*. These small grammatical markers are sometimes referred to as 'grammatical morphemes'.

One of the best-known studies which investigated the development of grammatical morphemes in child first language development is one carried out by a psycholinguist named Roger Brown in the late 60's and early 70's. He studied how three children, Adam, Eve and Sarah, learned 14 of these morphemes over time, and found that the three children studied acquired these morphemes in a remarkably similar sequence. See the list below for the order in which some of these morphemes were acquired:

present progressive *-ing* (she is runn*ing*)
plural *-s* (two book*s*)
irregular past forms (she *went*)
possessive *'s* (daddy*'s* hat)
copula (yes, she *is*; she*'s* a nice girl)
articles *the* and *a*
regular past *-ed* (she walk*ed*)
third person singular simple present *-s* (she run*s*)
auxiliary *be* (he's coming)

A child who had mastered the grammatical morphemes at the bottom of the list was sure to have mastered those at the top of the list, but the reverse was not true. Thus, Brown could claim there was evidence for a sequence or **order of acquisition**. The children mastered the morphemes at different rates, however. For example, Eve mastered nearly all the morphemes before she was two years old while Sarah was nearly four before she reached the same level. The study carried out by Brown is called a **longitudinal** study. This means that he studied the same learners over a period of time. Jill and Peter de Villiers did a **cross-sectional** study, which means that they looked at a large group of children who were at different ages and stages of development, and then they made an informed guess about what the sequence or order of acquisition was for an individual child. They found that children who correctly used the morphemes which Adam and Eve and Sarah had acquired late were also correct in using the ones which Adam, Eve and had acquired early, but those who accurately used the "early" morphemes had not necessarily mastered the "late" ones. The children mastered the morphemes at different ages–just as Adam and Eve and Sarah had done, but the **order** of their acquisition was very similar. These children were similar to each other and similar to Adam, Eve and Sarah.

Section III: Morpheme Acquisition

b) "Natural" Second Language

Much research has focussed on how learners develop the use of inflections and function words, like the third person singular *-s*, or the past tense *-ed* or the articles *a* and *the*. These small grammatical markers are sometimes referred to as 'grammatical morphemes'.

Several studies to examine the development of grammatical morphemes have been carried out with children who have learned English as a second language in a "natural" environment.

The researchers took samples from a large number of learners at one point in time, scored each morpheme for accuracy in the learners' speech and came up with an "accuracy" order for the morphemes. These studies were done with learners of different ages and from different first language backgrounds.

The overall results of the studies revealed an order which, while not the same as that found in the first language studies, was similar to the first language order of acquisition, even among children from different first language backgrounds. This suggests that 'natural' second language learners acquire grammatical morphemes in much the same way that first language learners do and that this 'natural' sequence is not determined only or even mainly by the child's first language.

Section III

c) Discussion questions

1. What seems to determine the order?

2. Are the earliest acquired necessarily the simplest constructions?

3. Are the last acquired the hardest?

4. Do you think the order will be the same for classroom learners?

5. Should we design syllabi which follow the "natural" orders?

Conclusions: "Natural Orders" of Acquisition

Questions

With second language learners learning to form questions in "natural" settings, then, there appears to be a sequence of development which is typical of most learners, and the stages are similar in most respects to first language question development. There are also differences which seem to be due to influence of the mother-tongue as well as other individual factors. What is perhaps most striking however, is that even children whose first language has subject-auxiliary inversion for question, go through a phase of using the declarative word order in forming questions in their second language[1].

Negatives

This division of learners' development into stages suggests a neatness and regularity which may be misleading. In reality, the stages are not so separate and learners may use a number of different forms at one point in time, a *stage* being identified by the emergence or increasing frequency of a particular form rather than by the absence of an earlier one. Nevertheless, the research evidence does suggest that second language learners in *"natural"* settings go through similar stages as they acquire the negative and that, to a large extent, these stages are similar to those which are observed in first language learning.

Grammatical Morphemes

Although a review of all the *morpheme acquisition* studies suggests that the learner's first language has a more important influence on acquisition orders than some researchers have claimed, there are some very strong patterns of similarity which cannot be explained by transfer from the first language.

There are still some unanswered questions in the morpheme acquisition literature. Nonetheless, it does seem as if second language learners have a tendency to acquire a set of English morphemes in a certain order. Just how much variation in this order is due to mother-tongue influence, the situation in which the learner language is observed, and individual learner factors is something we will continue to discuss in this and the next unit in this module.

Even though written and formal spoken French has subject-auxiliary inversion for questions, children and adults in informal speech tend to use the declarative construction "tu viens avec nous?" "Pourquoi il a fait ça?" Thus when a French speaker learning English fails to use subject-auxiliary inversion, he or she may be transferring structures from his or her L1.

Day 3

Activity 8 ***The Characteristics of "Natural" and Classroom Settings***

Objective To tap that you already know about the differences between "natural" and instructional learning environments

- Work in small groups to brainstorm the differences between "natural" and instructional language learning environments. In other words, describe the differences between the characteristics of "natural" and instructional settings, including both traditional instructional settings and more up-to-date methodologies.

NATURAL	INSTRUCTIONAL	
	Traditional	Modern

Day	3	
Activity	9	***Concluding Remarks***
Objective	To summarize the activities of the day and to assign take-home reading	

Suggested Reading:

Transcript for lecture, Activity 7: *"Natural" First and Second Language Orders of Acquisition* (pages 183-189).

(This transcript has been included in the event that you would like to review the lecture on orders of acquisition.)

Lightbown, P.M. 1983. "Core ESL in Québec : What results can we expect?" *Dialogue; A Newsletter on the Teaching of English and French as Second Languages*. Vol. 2, no.1, The Council of Ministers of Education: Canada, November 1983. pp 1,4,5,6 (pages 190-192)

LEARNER LANGUAGE AND INPUT IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

DAY 4

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Objectives of Day 4

- ***To become familiar with the characteristics of classroom learner language***
- ***To become familiar with the characteristics of input (language available) in the classroom***

At the end of the session, you will:

- be familiar with the differences between second language acquisition in the classroom and in a "natural" environment
- know about the research done in Québec classrooms over the past decade
- be familiar with the modification native speakers make in their speech when addressing second language learners
- know about the varieties and the features of input in the second language classroom
- be able to distinguish between input and interaction

Day	4	
Activity	1	***Is Classroom Second Language Acquisition Like "Natural" Second Language Acquisition?***
Objective	To reflect on the difference between "natural" and classroom environments and what effect these differences might have on classroom language development	

Notes:

Day 4

Activity 2 ***Acquisition or Learning in the Audiolingual Classroom?***

Objective To explore whether form-based instruction affects acquisition orders

- To what extent does instruction affect acquisition orders?
- Can learners **acquire** in spite of their **learning**?
- When input is strictly controlled according to a form-based syllabus and when real communication rarely takes place, can the natural orders override the instructional sequence?

The morphemes

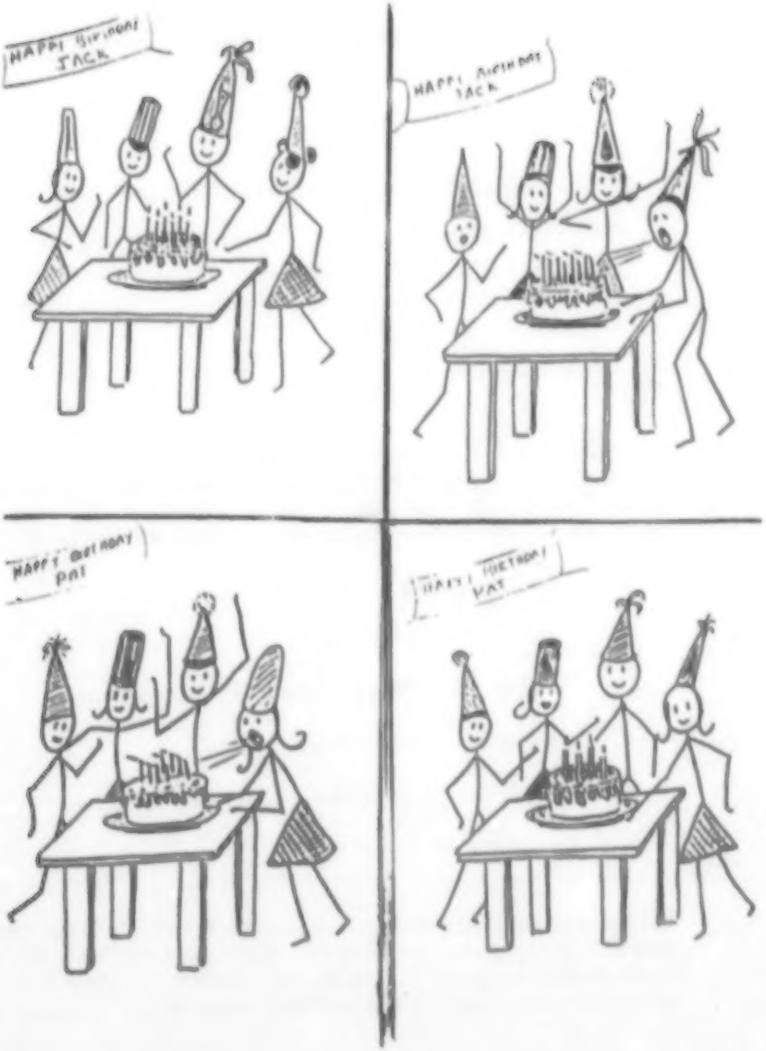
The following are the morphemes investigated in research on the second language development of students in Quebec elementary and secondary schools to determine whether there were similarities in the developmental sequences of these classroom learners with learners in other contexts:

1.	progressive -ing	It is raining.
2.	copula -s	She's happy.
3.	auxiliary -s	The girl is holding three balloons.
4.	3rd person -s	She wants a cookie.
5.	plural -s	Two trees and three houses
6.	possessive -s	The boy's hat.

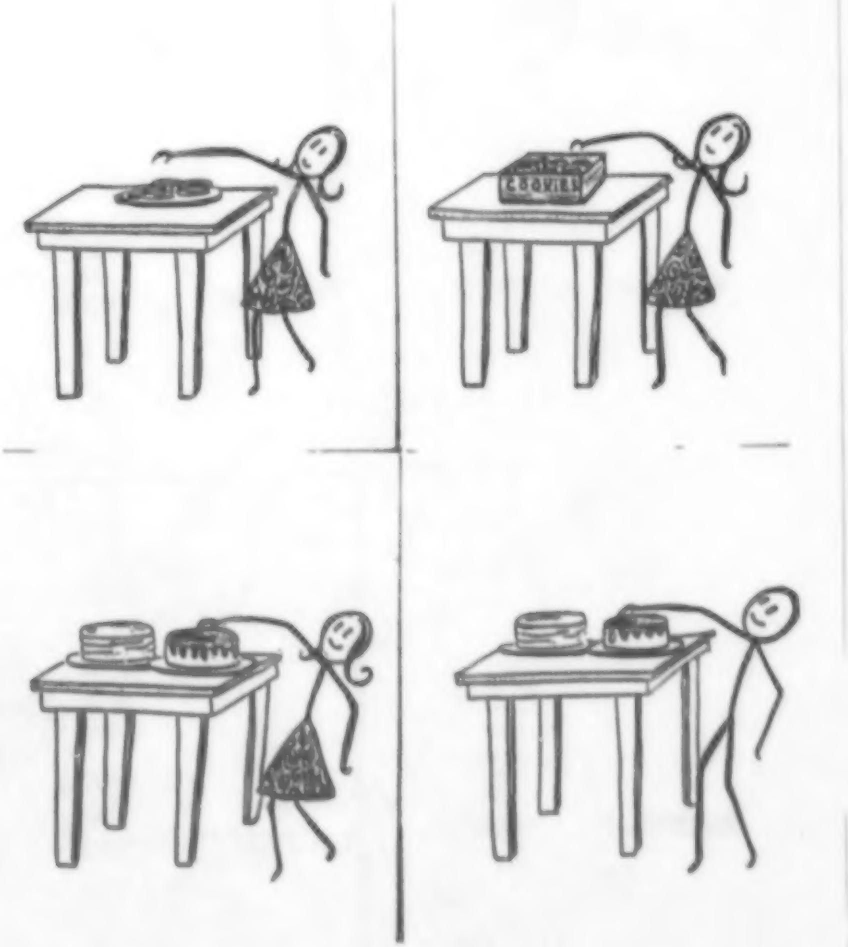
- The following are three of the pictures which are used in the picture card game research. In this game, the learner is asked to describe his or her picture in as much as details as possible to allow the interviewer to guess, from a set of four similar pictures, which one the student is describing.

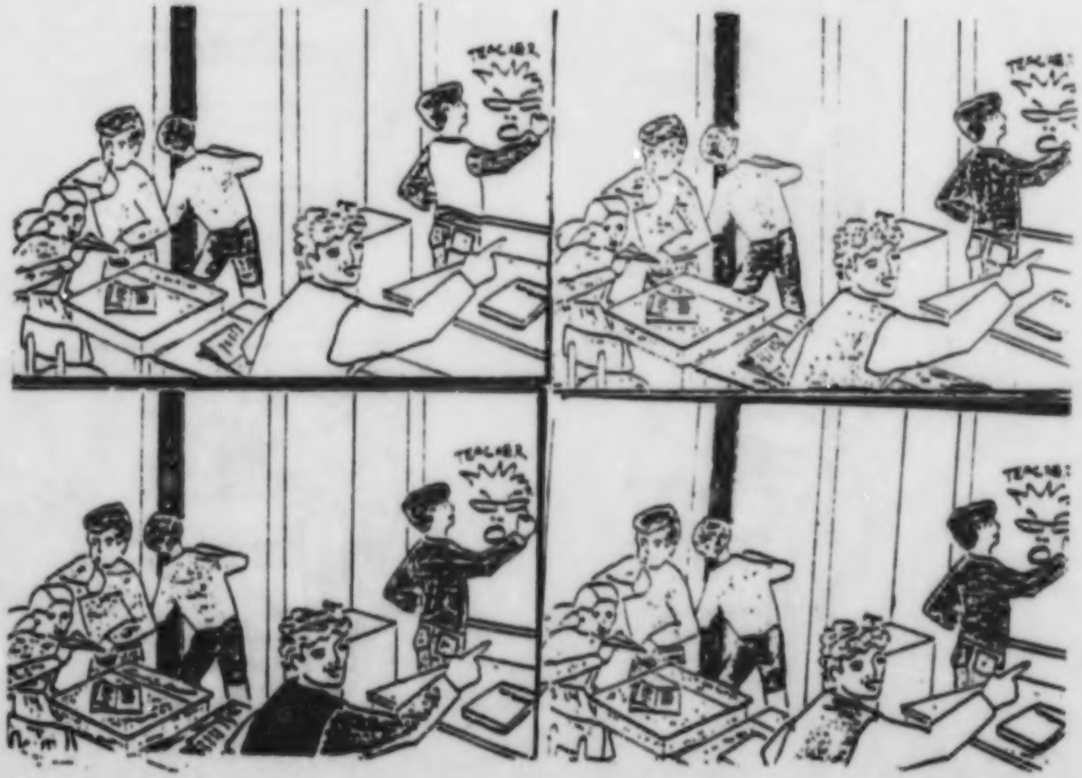
- Take a few minutes with your workshop leader to look at these pictures and think about what you might expect children to say while describing them. Specifically, what grammatical morphemes would a speaker be expected to use?

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY


HAPPY BIRTHDAY JACK
HAPPY BIRTHDAY JACK
HAPPY BIRTHDAY PAT
HAPPY BIRTHDAY PAT

THE CHILD WITH CAKE OR COOKIES




TEACHER
TEACHER
TEACHER
TEACHER

- The following text is a summary of the results and conclusion of Lightbown's (1983)[1] paper based on a study of the development of English by grade 6 to grade 11 audiolingual classroom-instructed learners.

- Read the summary and concentrate on discovering the answers to the above questions. When you have finished reading the summary discuss and compare your answers.

Summary of Classroom Acquisition Research

Lightbown set out to examine the following questions: To what extent does instruction affect acquisition orders. Can learners acquire *in spite of their* learning? *When input is strictly controlled according to a form-based syllabus and when real communication rarely takes place, can the "natural" orders override the instructional sequence?*

It was discovered that the development of L2 in classroom settings differs noticeably from the development of L2 in "natural" settings. Most noticeably, classroom learners use certain grammatical markers (specifically -s and -ing) correctly in the early stages of instruction and then drop them in favour of unmarked forms. This is not surprising given that one structure at a time is isolated, practised intensively and then dropped in favour of another structure. In contrast, natural second language learners seem to use mostly unmarked forms in the early stages and gradually add grammatical morphemes as they become aware of their functions in expressing meaning. Lightbown wonders if time spent in drilling students toward good habits *may be taking time away from activities which are more fruitful for language acquisition.*

The remarkable thing about the results is that, even though teachers conscientiously corrected errors in the grammatical morphemes studied, there was very little improvement over time. If anything, the learners' speech improved in fluency and vocabulary, but not in grammatical accuracy. Clearly, 20, 30 or 50 minutes a day of practising the same grammatical points, day after day, week after week, with learners who never use the language outside of the classroom, does not lead to the type of improvement hoped for. In fact, practising the same structures over and over again, with the use of a very limited vocabulary, must be very boring for the learners and can't do much for their motivation to learn the target language.

This study, while not supporting the "natural" order hypothesis, does not disconfirm it either. The differences may be due to the distorted version of the English language that students were exposed to. Perhaps the natural order would have prevailed if they had not been required to repeat and practice grammatical structures which were beyond what they would have been exposed to and what they would have included in their speech in natural circumstances.

---

[1] Lightbown, P. M. 1983. *Acquiring English L2 in Quebec classrooms*, Language Development at the Crossroads: Felix, W. & H. Wode (eds.). Tubingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

Finally, it is interesting that, although the students' responses were controlled to the extent that few errors occurred in classroom speech and learners were exposed to predominantly grammatically correct speech, the learners, when playing the Picture Card game and focussing on content as opposed to grammatical accuracy, tended to simplify and generalize just like learners who acquire their second language outside of the classroom. This means that language acquisition *does take place in classroom settings. The same processes (unconscious structuring, organizing, hypothesis-testing) which lead to the acquisition of a fully developed linguistic system in natural L1 and L2 learners seem to operate in classroom settings even when the focus of the classroom instruction is on form rather than on meaning.*

Lightbown asserts, however, that while this study shows that audiolingual instruction does not do what it sets out to do, on the bases of this study alone we cannot conclude that other approaches are better. What is needed is highly controlled and wide-scale studies that compare approaches ("communicative" to "notional-functional", for example). The problem here, of course, is that it is very difficult to define communicative and while teachers may claim to be using a communicative methodology, their techniques may vary widely.

❑❑❑

Day 4

Activity 3 ***Comparing the Approaches***

Objective To become acquainted with the research which has been done with learners of ESL in three approaches which have been implemented in Quebec language teaching in recent years

- The following are transcripts of learners playing the picture card game. There is one learner from each of the three programs (audiolingual, regular communicative, and intensive communicative).

Informally compare the learners in terms of:

1. volume of speech
2. plural accuracy
3. verb accuracy
4. fluency

The object is to understand the way in which learner language is analysed within the research, and not to actually do a detailed analysis.

Work in the same groups formed for the last activity, examining the transcripts on pages 128 to 130 of your workbook. Each member be responsible for one characteristic (e.g., 1. volume of speech) in all three learners' transcripts, and to report to the other members when all have had a chance to do their comparisons.

1. Audiolingual Learner*

This learner was in secondary III at the time of testing and had had approximately 450 hours of instruction since the beginning of grade 5 (2 hours per week in grades 5 and 6; 3-4 hours per week in secondary I, II and III).

The birthday party

1 Uh-, at the top of the picture-, it-, it write-, Happy Birthday Jack.

NS Mhm

1 And uh-, I see-, four peoples-, two girls and two boys

NS Mhm

1 In the centre-, a cake-, with uh-, one, two, three, four-, six candles.

NS Mhm

1 Uh-, a table,

NS Mhm, whose birthday is it?

1 Jack.

NS OK, this picture?

1 Yeah

NS Good. Thanks.

---

* Unpublished data provided by Patsy M. Lightbown. Subjects were students whose language was studied for Lightbown, P. M. 1983. Acquiring English L2 in Quebec classrooms. In Felix, S. & Wode, H. (eds.) 1983. *Language Development at the Crossroads.* Tubingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

2. Regular Communicative Learner*

This learner was in grade 5 at the time of testing and had approximately 2 hours per week of ESL since the beginning of grade 4 (approximately 100 to 140 hours of instruction).

The birthday party

# 2	It's table -, It's uh-, and on the table-, it's-, the-, comment on dit un gâteau?
NS	Cake
# 2	Cake and and its' *Happy Birthday Pat*
NS	OK
# 2	It's birthday Pat-, for Pat, Pat,
NS	Right
# 2	and two girls and two boy boys
NS	OK, is there anything else?
# 2	Um-, uh, he dancing and singing
NS	Alright-, Do you know how many candles?
# 2	Eight
NS	Eight. Could it be this one?
# 2	Yes
NS	Good. Alright.

3. Experimental Intensive Learner*

This learner was in grade 6 at the time of testing, had had approximately 2 hours of ESL instruction per week since the beginning of grade 4, and then started the intensive program of 4-5 hours per day, 5 days a week in February and was tested in June (approximately 450 hours of instruction in all).

The birthday party

# 3 On my picture there are five students in the class. One is drawing a picture of the teacher.

NS Mhm

# 3 And over - , it's a teacher, he write teacher. It's a boy. He has uh -, black hairs -, a red sweater, or sweatshirt with long sleeves and a pair of jeans ah ablue pants. He's at the front, drawing on the bil blackboard. At the door there is a -, girl or a boy. It seems like a girl. She's wearing a -, purple or lilac sweater or sweatshirt. He has blond hairs with uh bermudas, brown or ornnge.

NS Mhm

# 3 Uh, she's-, getting?

NS checking?

# 3 Checking for uh the teacher who come. Uh, there is another boy, uh in front of the -, teacher's desk. He's -, pointing the blackboard or the, the boy. He has red hairs.

NS Mhm

# 3 Uh -, he wears a -, sleeve? uh long-sleeve -, yellow or uh white uh-, shirt with a sweater with no sleeves.

NS Mhm

# 3 in wool? wool

NS Wool

# 3 Wool. And uh it's green. Uh, on the desk there is a book.

NS Mhm

# 3 the middle

NS Mhm

# 3 Uh, the desks of the students are separate. They are orange or brown -mm with a chair. There is a book on each -, of the two desks we see.One of the desks have a book uh open. Uh - a boy who has brown hairs uh said uh shhht to a girl who make uh an airplane with paper.

NS OK, Good. Is that it?

# 3 Yes.

Comparing the Approaches

The Three Learners

In terms of plural and verb accuracy, all three learners make errors and all three have a long way to go toward grammatical accuracy in language. However, although the intensive learner does not appear to be any more accurate than the other two, he produces a great deal more language, including more contexts for the use of the morphemes in question, than the learners from the other programs.

What truly distinguished these students most from each other was their fluency — the ease with which they spoke. The student from the intensive program produced more speech, his speech was more extended, he did not revert to French or ask the interviewer for help, he spoke with confidence and ease, with few hesitations, and organized his description in such a way as to make him quite fluent in English. His speech is quite representative of what learners in the intensive program can do.

The Three Programs

Unfortunately, no research has yet been done to examine the language development of learners from the regular communicative program. This is partially due to the fact that until 1989 there was no group of learners who had had all of their exposure to English under the new methodology and who had as many hours of exposure to ESL as a group of intensive ESL learners gets in one 5-month session. Now that there is a group that meets these specifications, the research will certainly be done and we will be able to compare learners from all three programs who have had the same number of hours of exposure to ESL in the classroom.

However, learners from the regular program have been used as controls in studies of the intensive programs, so we do have some information on their development and it is possible to compare the two groups to some extent.

Because the research on the language development of learners intensive programs is currently underway, the findings reported below are preliminary in nature, but they seem to confirm what our comparison of the three learners showed. In general, it seems that learners in these intensive programs are doing very well. In terms of their listening and reading comprehension skills, they improve considerably over the five months of intensive instruction. In fact, it has been found that the learners from the intensive programs performed better on one of the combined reading/listening comprehension measure than a group of secondary III learners who had received the same total hours of instruction but over a longer period of time. This was also true of their oral fluency skills.That is, compared with a group of secondary IV learners, intensive students appear much more at ease in using English, possess a wider range of communicative and strategic abilities, have greater vocabularies, produce more complex sentences and possess a much greater confidence when interacting with native speakers of English. However, in terms of their grammatical accuracy, intensive program learners still have much to learn. A comparison of their use of -s and -ing morphemes on the oral communication game revealed that their accuracy levels tend to be much lower than the accuracy levels of learners in the previous study of learners in audio-lingual based programs.

Because the intensive programs studied are highly communicative in nature with very little focus on grammar or correction, the question is raised as to whether this might be a factor contributing to these low levels of accuracy. This question will be investigated as the research continues. Nonetheless, the preliminary findings of this research are encouraging if one considers that the objective of these intensive programs is to develop in the learner fluency and confidence in using English in communicative situations.

Day 4

Activity 4 ***Input Modifications***

Objective To explore the modifications which native speakers make in their speech to second language learners

- The following excerpts are from transcripts of lectures given by the same speaker, a professor of psychology from the University of Ottawa, teaching the same content to a group of native speakers, and to a group of non-native speakers.

- Examine the excerpts briefly and to say which was given to native speakers and which was given to non-native speakers.

- The excerpts have been divided into three sections. Work on the section which corresponds to the number assigned to you to find evidence of modifications in the excerpt which was given to non-native speakers. In other words, compare the sections, underlining and briefly describing modifications which seem to be made in the interest of simplifying the input. Use page 136 to record your findings.

- Work alone or pair up with another participant assigned the same section.

Excerpt 1

1. OK. Then, we come to another funny word, ah-, which has quite a specific meaning in the context of instrumental conditioning, and the word is shaping.

   Now, what is shaping ? Well, to understand that, we first should probably refresh ourselves on the idea of the rat in the, uh-, Skinner box which eventually presses a lever and then gets a food reinforcement and then learns to press the lever that way. OK ? the the initial lever pressings were, if you like, random, just in the course of its exploratory activity, it happened to do that.

2. Now, let's put ourselves in a somewhat different situation. Let's assume that you have been hired by the Barnum & Bailey Circus, uh, because you have a good knowledge of principles of learning from psychology and uh, your task is to deal not so much with a rat in a Skinner box but uh, to deal with a lion in a circus act and uh,-

   Specifically, Barnum & Bailey, uh-, the management has thought that it would be interesting for audiences if this animal were to come to the centre ring, then uhmm, perform some kind of a bow or a curtsey, then proceed to a flagpole, take the uh, rope with its teeth and proceed to hoist up, uh, a flag, in the States, American, or in Canada, of course, the Canadian flag, but in any case, to hoist up a flag on the flagpole. OK ?

3. Now, you would become more stringent and you would require that before you reinforced, and as you can see, you would be in effect shaping the behavior of the animal to perform a behavioral sequence which was not part of its repertoire initially, by breaking it into little elements and adding one element at a time. That's the idea of shaping.

   Sure. Shaping is a conditioning technique which is really a variation of instrumental conditioning whereby you break up a complex behavior into a sequence of simple components and then condition the total sequence, one component at a time, using the principles of instrumental conditioning. OK. Alright, that's shaping.

Excerpt 2

1. OK. If it is, now I would like to go on to something quite different and ah, it is the idea of shaping.

   What is shaping ? Well, let me put it this way. If we go back to the idea of the Skinner box, and a rat in a Skinner box, the rat learns because, at first it will explore, it will go all over the Skinner box, and as it explores it will eventually hit that lever. It will press accidentally and it will get reinforcement, OK?

   So the behavior, followed by a reinforcement, tends to occur again. So learning takes place, that's fine.

2. But -, ahm-, let us suppose that someone told you, I'm going to give you a job. And, ahm-, I will give you sixty thousand dollars a year. If you accept this job, and it is a job with a circus, so you are going to be employed by a circus — his employment with a circus.

   And, ah, what you have to do is teach my lions to dance, ug, some ballet routine, and to do something else, perhaps take a flag and put it up on a flagpole, OK?, put the Canadian flag up on the flagpole.

   Once you have done that, you become more demanding.

3. In other words, what you find is that when it stands on its hind legs, sometimes it goes only this high, other times it goes higher just accidentally. So your second step is going to be, you reinforce only, you give meat only when the lion opps higher.

   In other words, you gradually give shape to the behavior you want. The principle is instrumental conditioning.

   A behavior that is followed by a reinforcement tends to repeat, but the practice is, you take the behavior one little bit at a time, and you build up a sequence of behaviors, so that eventually you demand the entire sequence in order to reinforce. And that is shaping.

Notes

Excerpt 1	Excerpt 2

Day	4	
Activity	5	***Classroom Input — Sources and Characteristics***
Objective	To tap the participants' knowledge of the varieties and features of input in the second language classroom	

- Look at the *Input and Interaction Matrix* on page 138 with the workshop leader. Get acquainted with the sources and characteristics of input.

Input and Interaction Matrix

Caracteristics of Input Sources of Input	1. Correct grammar	2. Some errors	3. Feedback on error	4 .Genuine* questions	5. Display* questions	6. Aids Comprehension	7. Contributes to fluency	8. Negotiation of meaning
1. Teacher's presentation of language structure or vocabulary								
2. Teacher giving instructions o r"management" directives								
3. Students involved in language "drill"								
4. Students working in groups on communicative activities								
5. Students reading from ESL materials								
6. Students reading from magazines or newspaper								
7. Listening to a dialogue from an ESL tapescript								
8. Listening to a radio program or watching a video								

* Genuine questions: speaker doesn't know the answer in advance

* Display questions: speaker knows answer but asks so that the learner will demonstrate his or her knowledge of language

#1 - Teacher/Student Interactions in Secondary IV Audiolingual Classroom

Teacher: *OK, we finished the book-, we finished in the book Unit 1, 2, 3. Finished workbook 1, 2, 3. So today we're going to start with Unit 4. Don't take your books yet, don't take your books. In 1, 2, 3 we worked in what tense? What tense did we work on? OK?*

Student: *Past*

Teacher: *In the past-, What auxiliary in the past?*

Student: *Did*

Teacher: *Did-,* (writes on board «1-2-3 Past)
Unit 4, unit 4, we're going to work in the present, present progressive, present continuous-, OK? You don't know what it is?

Student: *Yes*

Teacher: *Yes? What is it?*

Student: *Little bit*

Teacher: *A little bit*

Student: *—*

Teacher: *Eh?*

Student: *Uh, present continuous»*

Teacher: *Present continuous? What's that?»*

Student: *e-n-g*

Teacher: *i-n-g*

Student: *Yes*

Teacher: *What does that mean, present continuous? You don't know? OK, fine. What are you doing, Paul?*

Student: *Rien*

Teacher: *Nothing?*

Student: *Rien-, nothing*

Teacher: *You're not doing anything? You're doing something !»*

Student: *Not doing anything*

Teacher: *You're doing something !*

Student: *Not doing anything*

Teacher: *You're doing something-, Are, are you listening to me?*
Are you talking with Marc? What are you doing?

Student: *No, no-, uh-, listen-, uh-,*

Teacher: *Eh?*

Student: *to you*

Teacher: *You're you're listening to me*

Student: *Yes*

Teacher: *Oh-,* (writes What are you doing? I'm listening to you on the board)

Student: *Je-*

Teacher: *What are you-? You're excited.*

Student: *Yes*

Teacher: *You're playing with your eraser-,* (writes I'm playing with my eraser on the board)
Would you close the door please Bernard? Claude, what is he doing?

Student: *Close the door*

Teacher: *He is closing the door.* (writes He's closing the door on the board) *What are you doing, Mario.*

Student: *Moi, I listen to you*

Teacher: *You're listening to me*

Student: *Yes*

Teacher: *OK. Are you sleeping or are you listening to me?*

Student: *I don't -, moitié-moitié-, half and half.*

Teacher: *Half and half, half sleeping, half listening*

#2 - Teacher/Students interactions in a Grade 5 Intensive Communicative Classroom

Students tell class what bugs them. They have written «what bugs them» on a card or paper which they hold while speaking.

Teacher: *OK. Can I also have some volunteers —, come up and read what bugs you, some different (inaudible) here. Come up and leave-, read what bugs you. L...?*[1] *Close your desk.*

Student: *When I go to my friend on bicycle and the car, the car-, and the-, and doesn't put a flasher*
Teacher: *OK. What you're going to do: take it, and come up here and talk to the class. Cause you're talking to the board, and they'll not hear you.*
Student: *On my bicycle, and -, the car wanted to turn, and -, crash.*
Teacher: *Ah, yeah. That bugs me. Bugs me when you're driving in a car and you see a car coming and you wait and you wait for it to go, and then it turns so it doesn't even put on its flasher. Oh ! that's a good one! F...?*
Student: *It bugs me when a bee string me.*
Teacher: *Oh, when a bee stings me*
Student: *stings me*
Teacher: *Do you get stung often? Does that happen often? The bee stinging many times?»*
Student: *eah.*
Teacher: *Often?* (Teacher turns to students who aren't paying attention) *OK. S... and B..., you may begin working on a research project, hey?»* (Teacher turns her attention back to What bugs me)

Student: *It bugs me* (inaudible) *and my sister put on my clothes.*

Teacher: *Ah! She -, borrows your clothes? When you're older, you may appreciate it because you can switch clothes, maybe. M..., this is yours, I will check. —, OK. It's good.*
Student: *It bugs me when I'm sick and my brother doesn't help me -, my -, my brother, cause he -, me -,*
Teacher: *OK. You know-, when (inaudible) sick, you're sick at home in bed and you say, oh, to your brother or your sister: Would you please get me a drink of water? —Ah ! Drop dead ! you know, Go play in the traffic! You know, it's not very nice. G...!*
Student: *It bug me to have -,*
Teacher: *It bugs me. It bugzz me*
Student: *It bugs me when my brother takes my bicycle. Every day.*
Teacher: *Everyday? Ah! Doesn't your bro* (inaudible) *his bicycle? Could his brother lend his bicycle? Uh, your brother doesn't have a bicycle?*
Student: *Yeah! A new bicycle* (inaudible) *bicycle.*
Teacher: *Ah, well. Talk to your mom and dad about it. Maybe negotiate a new bicycle for your brother.*
Student:(inaudible)

---

[1] Students and teacher are identified by a fictitious initial only, for example "L."

Teacher: *He has a new bicycle. But his brother needs a new one too.»*
Student: *Yes!*
Teacher: *Hey, wo, just a minute! J...?*
Student: *M...'s brother has-,*
Teacher: *M...? Who has a new bicycle? You or your brother?*
Student: *My brother*
Teacher: *And you have an old one.*
Student: (inaudible)
Teacher: *And your brother takes your old one?*
Student: *clutch -, (inaudible) bicycle*
Teacher: *His bicycle! Ah! How old is your brother?*
Student: *March 23.*
Teacher: *His birthday?*
Student: *Yeah!*
Teacher: *And how old was he?*
Student: *Fourteen*
Teacher: *Fourteen. Well, why don't you tell your brother that when he takes your bike you will take his bike. And he may have more scratches than he figures for. OK? A ..., What bugs you?*
Student: *It bugs me when I ask my sister to help me with my bed, with my, with my bed, and she doesn't help.*
Teacher: *OK. You want her to help you make your bed?*
Student: *Yes.*
Teacher: *How old is your sister?*
Student: (inaudible)
Teacher: *Heh? A...?*
Student: *It bugs me when —,*
Teacher: *Sounded good so far! And %... %*
Student: (inaudible)
Teacher: *Tat was really good A... Come here a sec and repeat that super loud, so that M... in the back can hear you.*
Student: *It bugs me*
Teacher: *Louder!*
Student: *It bugs me when some people don't listen to F... (the teacher). (inaudible) speak all the time.*
Teacher: *Ah! That really bugs me. You know what bugs her, bugs me. Must be true for at least ...*
(They applaud)
Teacher: (speaking to student who is rocking his chair) *The same conditions for you as for V... If you're not sitting correctly in your chair one more time, I'll take your chair away.*
Student: *OK.*
Teacher: *OK? No more warnings. I'll take it, if there's another crazy group of -, four legs to the floor, cause it's finished. I'm gonna check it. OK! Any more volunteers for what bugs you?*

Day	4	
Activity	6	***Summary: Input in the L2 Classroom***
Objective	To review the sources and features of input in the L2 classroom and to distinguish between input and interaction	

- Distinguish between :

  Input, the linguistic forms which learners are exposed to and

  Interaction, the functions served by those forms, such as expansion, repetition and clarification.

- It is strongly recommended that you read Dr. P.M. Lightbown's article *Time to Teach* which is reproduced in Appendix, pages 193-201.

INPUT AND INTERACTION IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

DAY 5

Table of Activities: Day 5

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Objectives of Day 5

- ***To illustrate that familiarity with research findings on individual differences, learner language, and modifications of input and interaction leads to a better understanding of the roles of teacher and learner in the second language acquisition process***

At the end of the session, you will:

- be familiar with some popular positions on the nature of language learning in the classroom
- be familiar with the studies which have been done to examine the effects of form-based and meaning-based instruction on second language learning
- evaluate some of the common assumptions made about classroom language learning

Day 5

Activity 1 ***Positions on Language Learning in Classrooms***

Objective To become acquainted with some popular positions on the nature of language learning in classrooms, and to examine one's own view on grammatical and communicative instruction in the second language classroom

- **Read the following positions on the nature of language learning in classrooms and ask yourself which position or combination of positions is most consistent with your own view of language learning.**

Positions on Second Language Learning in Classrooms

1. Step-by-step

Cognitive psychologists have tended to see second language acquisition as the gradual building up of knowledge systems which can be called on automatically for speaking and understanding. At first, learners have to pay attention to any aspect of the language which they are trying to understand or produce. Gradually, through experience and practice, learners become able to use certain parts of their knowledge so quickly and automatically that they are not even aware that they are doing it. This frees them to concentrate or focus on other aspects of the language which, in turn, gradually become automatic.

This implies, however, that the gradual attainment of automaticity is a linear process, while, in fact, the development is marked by bursts of progress and periods of back-sliding, making it a much more bumpy road. Recently, cognitive psychologists have investigated this phenomenon and they call it "restructuring". This refers to the observations that not everything we use automatically can be explained in terms of gradually building up automaticity through practice. Sometimes, the system restructures or somehow "fits" new knowledge into an existing system, without extensive practice. When the system quickly accommodates new knowledge appropriately, the learner enjoys a sudden burst of progress. When it incorporates the wrong things and restructures what had been previously acquired, apparent back-sliding can occur.

2. What is teachable ?

Some second language acquisition researchers have proposed an explanation for why it has often seemed that some things can be taught successfully whereas other things, even after extensive or intensive teaching, seem to remain unacquired. They claim that their research shows evidence that some linguistic structures, for example basic word order of sentences (both simple and complex sentences), develop along a particular developmental path. Any attempt to teach a word order pattern that is a «Stage 4 pattern to learners at Stage 1 will not work because learners have to pass through Stage 2 and get to Stage 3 before they are ready to acquire what is at Stage 4. These stages are determined by the learner's passage through various stages at which he or she is capable of processing, unconsciously analysing and organising larger and more complex sentences in the language.

On the other hand, they say, certain other aspects of language — vocabulary, certain grammatical morphemes — can be taught at any time. A learner's success will depend on motivation, intelligence, the quality of the instruction, etc.

These researchers emphasize the need for language teachers to know which aspects of language acquisition are developmental (and thus not learnable before certain points) and which are variational (and thus learnable at various points in learner language development).

3. Just listen

One of the most influential — and most controversial — views of second language development is the one which states that second language learners need not drill and practise language in order to learn it. It is enough to hear and understand the target language. This position considers that second language acquisition and second language learning are entirely separate processes. According to this view, learners may either acquire (unconsciously internalize) the structures of the target language while concentrating on the meaning conveyed in the language they hear or they may learn (consciously focus on and study) target language rules in situations of formal instruction. Knowledge of language which second language speakers have learned can only be used, according to this view, when the speaker is given plenty of time to plan what he or she will say and when he or she is more concerned with form than with meaning. When the speaker's main concern is with exchanging meaningful messages, he or she will use the language system he or she has acquired. According to this view, speaking practice, error correction and formal teaching of grammar do not have any real effect on the processes of language acquisition. Language acquisition takes place simply through the learner's exposure to comprehensible input.

4. Get it right from the beginning

The position on language acquisition which was the background for audio lingual teaching (such as the Lado English Series) was that learners needed to build up their language knowledge gradually by practising only correct forms. Teachers avoided letting learners speak freely because this would lead them to make errors. The errors, it was said, would become habits. So it was better to prevent these bad habits before they happened.

Supporters of communicative language teaching have strongly argued that errors are a natural part of any learning process and that the motivation of learners is stifled by an insistence on always getting it right. They argue for the value of developing fluency before accuracy.

Recently, some researchers and educators have revived the concern that allowing learners too much freedom without correction and explicit instruction will lead to early fossilization of errors. Once again we hear the call for making sure learners get it right from the beginning.

5. Consciousness-raising

This position offers support for the idea that it is sometimes necessary to draw learners' attention to their errors and to focus on certain linguistic (vocabulary or grammar) points.

The difference between this position and the get it right from the beginning position is that this position acknowledges that it is appropriate for learners to engage in meaningful language use from the very beginning of their exposure to the second language and that much of language acquisition will develop naturally out of such language use.

The difference between this position and the just listen position is that it does not consider that comprehensible input and meaningful interaction will be enough to bring learners to high levels of accuracy as well as fluency. Researchers who take this position argue that learners need and can benefit from explicit focus on the language.

This position is very much like the teachability position except that those who take the consciousness-raising position emphasize the hypothesis that some aspects of language must be taught. For example, when an error learners make is due to transfer from their first language, and when all the learners in a group tend to make the same error, it will be virtually impossible for learners to recognize and correct this error on their own.

This position further differs from just listen in that it assumes that what learners learn when they are focusing on language itself can eventually lead to changes in their interlanguage system. The holders of this position do not argue that teaching particular language points will prevent learners from making errors or that learners will be able to begin using a form or structure with complete accuracy as soon as it is taught. Furthermore, they emphasize that they do not believe that the focused teaching must be done in a way which involves explicit explanations of the point or that learners need to be able to explain why something is right or wrong. Rather, they simply argue that the learner's attention must be drawn to the way in which his or her language differs from that of a more proficient speaker.

Teachers must look for the right moment to create increased awareness on the part of the learner—ideally, a time when the learner is motivated to say something and wants to say it as clearly and correctly as possible.

Day	**5**	
Activity	**2**	***Some Studies of Classroom Learning***
Objective	To become acquainted with the studies which have been done to examine the effects of form-based and meaning-based instruction on L2 learning	

- The following are summaries of five studies on the effects of form-based and meaning-based instruction. Each text provides a description of the study in terms of subjects, research questions, measurement instruments, etc., but does not give the actual results of the study.

- Read the study corresponding to your group number (Group 1, Study 1, etc.). When you have finished reading the study, discuss the study with your group members and predict what you think the results of the study were. As a group, prepare yourselves to present this study, together with your predictions, to the other goups. Give a rationale for your predictions with support from what you now know about the nature of language learning in classrooms.

- Eventually, your workshop leader will provide you with answer keys which report the actual results of these studies.

Study #1

This study was carried out to investigate the effects of communicative language teaching on second language learning. Savignon compared the linguistic and communicative skills of three groups of college students enrolled in French language courses at a university in the United States. All three groups received the same number of hours of instruction in regular audio-lingual programs where the focus was on the practice and manipulation of grammatical forms. However, **Group One** (the communicative group), had an additional hour devoted to communicative tasks in an effort to encourage practice in using French in meaningful, creative and spontaneous ways; **Group Two** (cultural group) had an additional hour devoted to a variety of experiences which were designed to foster an awareness of the French language and culture through films, music and art (all presented in English); and **Group Three** (control group) had an additional hour in the language laboratory doing what they would normally do in the language lab using the audio-lingual program materials.

Tests to measure learners' linguistic and communicative abilities were administered before and after instruction to see if there were any significant differences between groups on these measures. The tests of "linguistic competence" included a variety of grammar tests, teachers' evaluations of speaking skill and course grades. The tests of "communicative competence" included measures of fluency and ability to understand and transmit information in a variety of tasks which included: 1) discussion with a native speaker of French, 2) an interview of a native speaker of French, 3) the reporting of facts about oneself or one's recent activities and 4) a description of ongoing activities.

Question:

- *Which of these three groups did better on tests of "linguistic competence?"*
- *Which did better on tests of "communicative competence"+ Why ?*

Study # 1

	Linguistic competence	Communicative competence
Communicative group		
Culture group		
Language lab group		

Study #2

This study was undertaken to investigate the effects of differences in instruction on the English language proficiency of adult learners enrolled in a six-week summer intensive course. All learners were receiving communicative instruction — that is, instruction which focused primarily on meaning-based practice and opportunities to use the L2 in creative and spontaneous ways. However, some teachers focused more on grammar than others. For example, the teacher in one of the classes (Class A) spent considerably more time teaching grammar than did the teachers in the other two classes (Classes B and C). In Class B, the students' attention was frequently drawn to specific linguistic features, but this was done while students were engaged in communicative activities, not as a separate lesson. In Class C, attention was rarely, if ever, drawn to specific linguistic features.

The subjects were given a number of proficiency tests before and after instruction. These tests included:

1) a **listening comprehension test**
2) a **reading comprehension test**
3) an **oral interview/interaction task**
4) a **multiple choice grammar test**
5) a **multiple-choice discourse** test consisting of a series of short passages of 1-5 sentences in length with one sentence missing. The subject's task was to find the appropriate completion from a list of three alternatives.
6) a **sociolinguistic task** consisting of a description of a number of different sociocultural contexts. The subject's task was to select from a list of three alternatives the most appropriate way to express a given idea in that particular context.

Question:

- *Did differences in instruction lead to differences in learners' improvement? What kinds of differences? Why?*

Study # 2

Groups / Proficiency Tests	More grammar	Some grammar	No grammar
1. Listening comprehension			
2. Reading comprehension			
3. Oral interview/interaction			
4. Multiple choice grammar			
5. Multiple choice discourse			
6. Sociolinguistic task			

Study #3

Both teachers and researchers have noticed that French-speaking learners of English often use *have* where they should use *be* in English. This includes structures such as "I have fourteen years" which appear to be based quite directly on transfer from French. Also included, however, are sentences such as the following, produced by students describing pictures in the picture card game we worked on in Day 4 of this module: "You have three boys who are playing hockey" or "We have a girl holding three balloons." Although these uses of *have* as an introducer or «presentative» are not incorrect, and native speakers of English might also use them, English speakers tend instead to use a *be* construction, usually "There is a girl ... ". Furthermore, francophone learners also produce sentences which are not acceptable to native speakers, such as "Have a boy wearing blue jeans" or "He has a desk with a book on it". Both the acceptable and unacceptable *have* introducers appear to be based on a sort of loose translation of the French introducer expression Il y a ...

Below are three descriptions — case studies — of francophone students' experience in learning and being taught the English introducer forms:

Group 1. These students were in audio-lingual classes. By the end of grade 6 they had had two or three years of carefully structured practice and drill including many hours of practice with *there is/ there are* constructions. Their textbook did not introduce the verb *have* at all during this time. When they played the Picture Card Game at the end of grade 6, they always introduced their pictures by saying, "There's a boy ..." or "It's a boy ... " and never used sentences with have.

When these students moved to secondary school, they began to use the Lado English Series which introduced the verb *have* for the first time, and also provided further practice with *there is/there are*.

Question:

- *Do you think there were any changes in their use of* there is / there are? *Why?*

Group 2. These students were in intensive ESL classes taught by teachers who favored a «communicative approach» to language teaching and learning. Students heard a variety of English correct and fluent speech from their teacher, speech from classmates which included both correct and incorrect sentences. They had no special practice or explanation on *be/have* contrasts in general or on *there is/there are* in particular.

Question:

- *How do you think these students' use of introducer forms developed? Why?*

Group 3. These students were in an intensive ESL class taught by a teacher who noticed and became very sensitive to the students' use of *have* in introducer phrases. She launched a campaign to correct this non-native use of *have* and to get students to use *there is/there are*. She frequently corrected them and often made a joke of pretending to understand "You have a boy ..." to mean she was actually holding a boy in her hands, and she pretended to search for "the boy" when students produced one of these sentences. Eventually students corrected each other on this point.

Question:

- *How do you think these students used* be *and* have *constructions when playing the Picture Card Game? Why?*

Study # 3

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Type A Instruction			
Development of introducer forms?			

Study #4

In this study, differences in the quantity and quality of student language in group work versus teacher-centered activities were investigated. The students were Mexican adults learning English as a foreign language in Mexico City. Over a two-week period audio recordings were made of four classes in which students and teachers discussed the similarities between humans and other animals in both group and teacher-centered activities. The group activity consisted of pairs of students and the teacher-centered activity involved the teacher at the front of the class leading the discussion with approximately 15 students seated in front of her.

Different coding schemes were used to analyze the language which the students produced under both conditions. The first scheme included categories to measure 1) the number of reactions and responses in both types of activities; 2) the number of opportunities to speak; and 3) the number of attempts made to encourage each other to speak (e. g. asking questions, giving commands, etc.). A second coding scheme measured the total amount of student talk in both activity types and the extent to which a student's participation was controlled by the teacher or another student. A third coding scheme measured more qualitative features of learner language. This included a wide range of functional, social and rhetorical skills such as whether students initiated discussions, moved conversations on to a new topic, asked for clarification, contradicted, interrupted, encouraged, confirmed, negated, or elaborated on each other's utterances.

Question:

- *Was the language of learners quantitatively or qualitatively different in group work versus teacher-centered activities? How?*

Study # 4

	Group Coding schemes	Group work	Teacher-centered
QUANTITATIVE	1 # reactions and responses # opportunities to speak # attempts to encourage each other		
	2 Total amount of student talk extent to which student's participation controlled by teacher or other student		
QUALITATIVE	3 Whether students: initiated discussions switched topics asked for clarification contradicted interrupted		

Study #5

In this study, the investigator examined the language produced by adult learners in task-centered discussions done in pairs. There were 18 subjects in the study — 12 non-native speakers of English whose native language was Spanish and 6 native English speakers. The non-native speakers of English represented two proficiency levels: intermediate and advanced.

Each subject was asked to participate in separate discussions with a speaker from each of the three levels. For example, an intermediate-level speaker had a conversation with another intermediate-level speaker, a conversation with an advanced-level speaker, and a conversation with a native speaker of English. The investigator wanted to compare the speech of native and non-native speakers in conversations as well as to compare differences across proficiency levels in these conversation pairs.

Question:

- *What kinds of differences would you expect from the language produced within the different pairs? Do you think learners talked more with other learners than they did with native speakers? Did learners produce more talk with advanced-level than with intermediate partners? Did learners make more errors and false starts with native speakers or with other learners?*

Study # 5

	Native	Intermediate Non-Native	Advanced Non-Native
Native			
Intermediate Non-Native			
Advanced Non-native			

Day	5	
Activity	3	**Beyond "Common Sense" in Classroom Language Learning**
Objective	To examine some of the "common sense" assumptions traditionally associated with classroom language learning and to re-think them in the light of what is now known about language learning and classroom interaction	

- This activity involves examining some of the "common sense" assumptions traditionally associated with classroom language learning, examining their validity, and re-phrasing them to reflect your greater understanding of the language learning process.

- The assumptions are divided into five sections, each roughly reflecting the contents of one of the five days in the module. Each group is to work on at least two sections. The object is for each section to be examined by at least two groups.

  For example:
  Group 1: Sections 1 and 3
  Group 2: Sections 2 and 4
  Group 3: Sections 3 and 5
  Group 4: Sections 2 and 4
  Group 5: Sections 1 and 5

- Carefully examine the assumptions and re-phrase or modify them to reflect what you know about language teaching and learning from your own experience in the classroom, and what you have learned about the nature of language learning from the units in this module.

- As a team you should prepare your re-written version for presentation to the group as a whole, being prepared to support your position with information from the module. Divide up the presentation among the team members as you see fit. Finall, in presenting your position, act as group leaders, drawing out contributions from the other participants, encouraging discussion and encouraging everyone concerned to draw upon his or her own experience in the classroom.

- Eventually your workshop leader will hand out re-written versions of the assumptions to which you can compare your own.

Example

Common sense assumption:
Students will learn what they are taught.

Re-written version:
Second language learners will learn the language they are exposed to. However, the fact that something can be taught does not mean it can be learned at any stage in a learner's development. There are sequences of acquisition which will develop as the learner becomes ready. Furthermore, there are some things which learners eventually come to know or understand without having been taught.

"Common Sense" Assumptions

Section 1: Assumptions that relate to *Individual Differences*

a. The earlier a second language is introduced in schools, the better.

b. People with high I. Q.s are better language learners.

Section 2: Assumptions that relate to *Theories of Language Learning*

a. Learners learn language mainly by imitation.

b. Language acquisition is a linear process, with learners practising certain grammatical forms until they gradually get them right.

Section 3: Assumptions that relate to *Errors and Orders of Acquisition*

a. Curriculum designers should organize the content from simple to complex, one structure at a time.

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b. Teachers should correct errors as quickly and as frequently as possible so that the learners won't form bad habits.

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Section 4: Assumptions that relate to *Learner Language and Input*

a. The main cause of mistakes in learner language is native language interference.

b. Teachers should only use materials that include structures that the learners have already mastered; in other words, the materials should contain little or nothing that is new.

Section 5: Assumptions that Relate to *Input and Interaction*

a. In communicative language teaching, teachers should never correct student errors.

b. Allowing learners to talk freely in group work exposes them to poor input which eventually leads to fossilization of errors.

Day	5	
Activity	4	***Concluding Remarks***
Objective	To conclude the module on second language acquisition and to suggest follow-up reading	

- The article *Research on Second Language Acquisition:What can teachers use?* should be read as a wrap-up to this module. (See Appendix 5, pages 202-212).

Appendices

Pages

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The Significance of Learners' Errors

S P CORDER

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When one studies the standard works on the teaching of modern languages it comes as a surprise to find how cursorily the authors deal with the question of learners' errors and their correction. It almost seems as if they are dismissed as a matter of no particular importance, as possible annoying, distracting, but inevitable by-products of the process of learning a language about which the teacher should make as little fuss as possible. It is of course true that the application of linguistic and psychological theory to the study of language learning added a new dimension to the discussion of errors: people now believed they had a principled means for accounting for these errors, namely that they were the result of interference in the learning of a second language from the habits of the first language. The major contribution of the linguist to language teaching was seen as an intensive contrastive study of the systems of the second language and the mother tongue of the learner: out of this would come an inventory of the areas of difficulty which the learner would encounter and the value of this inventory would be to direct the teacher's attention to these areas so that he might devote special care and emphasis in his teaching to the overcoming, or even avoiding, of these predicted difficulties. Teachers have not always been very impressed by this contribution from the linguist for the reason that their practical experience has usually already shown them where these difficulties lie and they have not felt that the contribution of the linguist has provided them with any significantly new information. They noted for example that many of the errors with which they were familiar were not predicted by the linguist anyway. The teacher has been on the whole, therefore, more concerned with *how* to deal with these areas of difficulty than with the simple identification of them, and here has reasonably felt that the linguist has had little to say to him.

In the field of methodology there have been two schools of thought in respect of learners' errors. Firstly the school which maintains that if we were to achieve a perfect teaching method the errors would never be committed in the first place, and therefore the occurrence of errors is merely a sign of the present inadequacy of our teaching techniques. The philosophy of the second school is that we live in an imperfect world and consequently errors will always occur in spite of our best efforts. Our ingenuity should be concentrated on techniques for dealing with errors after they have occurred.

Both these points of view are compatible with the same theoretical standpoint about language and language learning, psychologically behaviourist and linguistically taxonomic. Their application to language teaching is known as the audiolingual or fundamental skills method.

Both linguistics and psychology are in a state at the present time of what Chomsky has called 'flux and agitation' (Chomsky, 1966). What seemed to be well established doctrine a few years ago is now the subject of extensive debate. The consequence of this for language teaching is likely to be far reaching and we are perhaps only now beginning to feel its effects. One effect has been perhaps to shift the emphasis away from a preoccupation with *teaching* towards a study of *learning*. In the first instance this has shown itself as a renewed attack upon the problem of the acquisition of the mother tongue. This has inevitably led to a consideration of the question whether there are any parallels between the processes of acquiring the mother tongue and the learning of a second language. The usefulness of the distinction between acquisition and learning has been emphasised by Lambert (1966) and the possibility that the latter may benefit from a study of the former has been suggested by Carroll (1966).

The differences between the two are obvious but not for that reason easy to explain: that the learning of the mother tongue is inevitable, whereas, alas, we all know that there is no such inevitability about the learning of a second language; that the learning of the mother tongue is part of the whole maturational process of the child, whilst learning a second language normally begins only after the maturational process is largely complete; that the infant starts with no overt language behaviour, while in the case of the second language learner such behaviour, of course, exists; that the motivation (if we can properly use the term in the context) for learning a first language is quite different from that for learning a second language.

On examination it becomes clear that these obvious differences imply nothing about the *processes* that take place in the learning of first and second language. Indeed the most widespread hypothesis about how languages are learned, which I have called behaviourist, is assumed to apply in both circumstances. These hypotheses are well enough known not to require detailing here, and so are the objections to them. If then these hypotheses about language learning are being questioned and new hypotheses being set up to account for the process of child language acquisition, it would seem reasonable to see how far they might also apply to the learning of a second language.

Within this new context the study of errors takes on a new importance and will I believe contribute to a verification or rejection of the new hypothesis.

This hypothesis states that a human infant is born with an innate predisposition to acquire language; that he must be exposed to language for the acquisition process to start; that he possesses an internal mechanism of unknown nature which enables him from the limited data available to him to construct a grammar of a particular language. How he does this is largely unknown and is the field of intensive study at the present time by linguists and psychologists. Miller (1964) has pointed out that if we wished to create an automaton to replicate a child's performance, the order in which it tested various aspects of the grammar could only be decided after careful analysis of the successive stages of language acquisition by human children. The first steps therefore in such a study are seen to be a longitudinal description of a child's language throughout the course of its development. From such a description it is eventually hoped to develop a picture of the procedures adopted by the child to acquire language (McNeill, 1966).

The application of this hypothesis to second language learning is not new and is essentially that proposed fifty years ago by H. E. Palmer (1922). Palmer maintained that we were all endowed by nature with the capacity for assimilating language and that this capacity remained available to us in a latent state after the acquisition of a primary language. The adult was seen as capable as the child of acquiring a foreign language. Recent work (Lenneberg, 1967) suggests that the child who fails for any reason i.e. deafness, to acquire a primary language before the age of 12 thereafter rapidly loses the capacity to acquire language behaviour at all. This finding does not of course carry with it the implication that the language learning capacity of those who have successfully learned a primary language also atrophies in the same way. It still remains to be shown that the process of learning a second language is of a fundamentally different nature from the process of primary acquisition.

If we postulate the same mechanism, then we may also postulate that the procedures or strategies adopted by the learner of the second language are fundamentally the same. The principal feature that then differentiates the two operations is the presence or absence of motivation. If the acquisition of the first language is a fulfilment of the predisposition to develop language behaviour, then the learning of the second language involves the replacement of the predisposition of the infant by some other force. What this consists of is in the context of this paper irrelevant.

Let us say therefore that, *given motivation*, it is inevitable that a human being will learn a second language if he is exposed to the language data. Study of language aptitude does in some measure support such a view since motivation and intelligence appear to be the two principal factors which correlate significantly with achievement in a second language.

I propose therefore as a working hypothesis that some at least of the *strategies* adopted by the learner of a second language are substantially the same as those by which a first language is acquired. Such a proposal does not imply that the course or *sequence* of learning is the same in both cases.

We can now return to the consideration of errors made by learners. When a two-year-old child produces an utterance such as 'This mummy chair' we do not normally call this deviant, ill-formed, faulty, incorrect or whatever. We do not regard it as an error in any sense at all, but rather as a normal childlike communication which provides evidence of the state of his linguistic development at that moment. Our response to that behaviour has certain of the characteristics of what would be called 'correction' in a classroom situation. Adults have a very strong tendency to repeat and expand the child's utterance in an adult version; something like 'Yes, dear, that's Mummy's chair'.

No one expects a child learning his mother-tongue to produce from the earliest stages only forms which in adult terms are correct or non-deviant. We interpret his 'incorrect' utterances as being evidence that he is in the process of acquiring language and indeed, for those who attempt to describe his knowledge of the language at any point in its development, it is the 'errors' which provide the important evidence. As Brown and Frazer (1964) point out the best evidence that a child possesses construction rules is the occurrence of systematic errors, since, when the child speaks correctly, it is quite possible that he is only repeating something that he has heard. Since we do not know what the total input has been we cannot rule out this possibility. It is by reducing the language to a simpler system than it is that the child reveals his tendency to induce rules.

In the case of the second language learner it might be supposed that we *do* have some knowledge of what the input has been, since this is largely within the control of the teacher. Nevertheless it would be wise to introduce a qualification here about the control of input (which is of course what we call the syllabus). The simple fact of presenting a certain linguistic form to a learner in the classroom does not necessarily qualify it for the status of input, for the reason that input is 'what goes in' not what is *available* for going in, and we may reasonably suppose that it is the learner who controls this input, or more properly his intake. This may well be determined by the characteristics of his language acquisition mechanism and not by those of the syllabus. After all, in the mother-tongue learning situation the data available as input is relatively vast, but it is the child who selects what shall be the input.

Ferguson (1966) has recently made the point that our syllabuses have been based at best upon impressionistic judgements and vaguely conceived theoretical principles where they have had any considered foundations at all. The suggestion that we should take more account of the learner's needs in planning our syllabuses is not new, but has not apparently led to any investigations, perhaps because of the methodological difficulties of determining what the learner's needs might actually be. Carroll (1955) made such a proposal when he suggested it might be worth creating a problem-solving situation for the learner in which he must find, by enquiring either of the teacher or a dictionary appropriate verbal responses for solving the problem. He pointed out that such a hypothesis contained certain features of what was believed to occur in the process of language acquisition by the child.

A similar proposal actually leading to an experiment was made by Mager but not in connection with language teaching (Mager, 1961); it is nevertheless worth quoting his own words:

> Whatever sequencing criterion is used it is one which the user calls a 'logical' sequence. But although there are several schemes by which sequencing can be accomplished and, although it is generally agreed that an effective sequence is one which is meaningful to the learner, the information sequence to be assimilated by the learner is traditionally dictated entirely by the instructor. We generally fail to consult the learner in the matter except to ask him to maximize the effectiveness of whatever sequence we have already decided upon.

He points out as the conclusions he draws from his small scale experiment that the next step would be to determine whether the learner-generated sequence, or, as we might call it, his *built-in syllabus*, is in some way more efficient than the instructor-generated sequence. It seems entirely plausible that it would be so. The problem is to determine whether there exists such a built-in syllabus and to describe it. It is in such an investigation that the study of learners' errors would assume the role it already plays in the study of child language acquisition, since, as has been pointed out, the key concept in both cases is that the learner is using a definite system of language at every point in his development, although it is not the adult system in the one case, nor that of the second language in the other. The learner's errors are evidence of this system and are themselves systematic.

The use of the term systematic in this context implies, of course, that there may be errors which are random, or, more properly, the systematic nature of which cannot be readily discerned. The opposition between systematic and non-systematic errors is important. We are all aware that in normal adult speech in our native language we are continually committing errors of one sort or another. These, as we have been so often reminded recently, are due to memory lapses, physical states, such as tiredness and psychological conditions such as strong emotion. These are adventitious artefacts of linguistic performance and do not reflect a defect in our knowledge of our own language. We are normally immediately aware of them when they occur and can correct them with more or less complete assurance. It would be quite unreasonable to expect the learner of a second language not to exhibit such slips of the tongue (or pen), since he is subject to similar external and internal conditions when performing in his first or second language. We must therefore make a distinction between those errors which are the product of such chance circumstances and those which reveal his underlying knowledge of the language to date, or, as we may call it his *transitional competence*. The errors of performance will characteristically be unsystematic and the errors of competence, systematic. As Miller (1966) puts it, 'It would be meaningless to state rules for making mistakes'. It will be useful therefore hereafter to refer to errors of performance as *mistakes*, reserving the term *error* to refer to the systematic errors of the learner from which we are able to reconstruct his knowledge of the language to date, i.e. his *transitional competence*.

Mistakes are of no significance to the process of language learning. However the problem of determining what is a learner's mistake and what a learner's error is one of some difficulty and involves a much more sophisticated study and analysis of errors than is usually accorded them.

A learner's errors, then, provide evidence of the system of the language that he is using (i.e. has learned) at a particular point in the course (and it must be repeated that he is using some system, although it is not yet the right system). They are significant in three different ways. First to the teacher, in that they tell him, if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn. Second, they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the language. Thirdly (and in a sense this is their most important aspect) they are indispensable to the learner himself, because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn. It is a way the learner has of testing his hypotheses about the nature of the language he is learning. The making of errors then is a strategy employed both by children acquiring their mother tongue and by those learning a second language.

Although the following dialogue was recorded during the study of child language acquisition, it bears unmistakable similarities to dialogues which are a daily experience in the second language teaching classroom:

Mother: Did Billy have his egg cut up for him at breakfast?
Child: Yes, I showeds him.
Mother: You what?
Child: I showed him.
Mother: You showed him?

Child: I seed him.
Mother: Ah, you saw him.
Child: Yes, I saw him.

Here the child, within a short exchange, appears to have tested three hypotheses: one relating to the concord of subject and verb in a past tense, another about the meaning of *show* and *see* and a third about the form of the irregular past tense of *see*. It only remains to be pointed out that if the child had answered *I saw him* immediately, we would have no means of knowing whether he had merely repeated a model sentence or had already learned the three rules just mentioned. Only a longitudinal study of the child's development could answer such a question. It is also interesting to observe the techniques used by the mother to 'correct' the child. Only in the case of one error did she provide the correct form herself: *You saw him*. In both the other cases, it was sufficient for her to query the child's utterance in such a form as: *you what?* or *You showed him?* Simple provision of the correct form may not always be the only, or indeed the most effective, form of correction since it bars the way to the learner testing alternative hypotheses. Making a learner try to discover the right form could often be more instructive to both learner and teacher. This is the import of Carroll's proposal already referred to.

We may note here that the utterance of a correct form cannot be taken as proof that the learner has learned the systems which would generate that form in a native speaker, since he may be merely repeating a heard utterance, in which case we should class such behaviour, not as language, but in Spolsky's term (Spolsky, 1966) 'language-like behaviour'. Nor must we overlook the fact that an utterance which is superficially non-deviant is not evidence of a mastery of the language systems which would generate it in a native speaker since such an utterance must be semantically related to the situational context. The learner who produced 'I want to know the English' might have been uttering an unexceptionable sentiment, but it is more likely that he was expressing the wish to know the English language. Only the situational context could show whether his utterance was an error or not.

Although it has been suggested that the strategies of learning a first and second language may be the same, it is nevertheless necessary at this point to posit a distinction between the two. Whilst one may suppose that the first language learner has an unlimited number of hypotheses about the nature of the language he is learning which must be tested (although strong reasons have been put forward for doubting this) we may certainly take it that the task of the second language learner is a simpler one: that the only hypotheses he needs to test are: 'Are the systems of the new language the same or different from those of the language I know?' 'And if different, what is their nature?' Evidence for this is that a large number, but by no means all, of his errors, are related to the systems of his mother tongue. These are ascribed to interference from the habits of the mother tongue, as it is sometimes expressed. In the light of the new hypotheses they are best not regarded as the persistence of old habits, but rather as signs that the learner is investigating the systems of the new language. Saporta (1966) makes this point clear. 'The internal structure of the (language acquisition) device, i.e. the learner, has gone relatively unexplored except to point out that one of its components is the grammar of the learner's native language. It has generally been assumed that the effect of this component has been inhibitory rather than facilitative'. It will be evident that the position taken here is that the learner's possession of his native language is facilitative and that errors are not to be regarded as signs of inhibition, but simply as evidence of his strategies of learning.

We have been reminded recently of Von Humboldt's statement that we cannot really teach language, we can only create conditions in which it will develop spontaneously in the mind in its own way. We shall never improve our ability to create such favourable conditions until we learn more about the way a learner learns and what his built-in syllabus is. When we do know this (and the learner's errors will, if systematically studied, tell us something about this) we may begin to be more critical of our cherished notions. We may be able to allow the learner's innate strategies to dictate our practice and determine our syllabus; we may learn to adapt ourselves to *his* needs rather than impose upon him *our* preconceptions of *how* he ought to learn, *what* he ought to learn and *when* he ought to learn it.

"Natural" Orders of Acquisition in First and Second Language Development

We have learned that child language is viewed as being systematic — that children go through certain stages in their language development in an ordered and somewhat predictable manner. In this text, we will discuss the development of some grammatical features of child language. Specifically, we will look at how and in what order children learn to form questions in a first language, how they learn negatives and also, in what order they learn inflections and function words. We will also look at how and in what order children learning a second language in a natural (or uninstructed) setting develop these aspects of the grammatical system. We'll begin our discussion with the development of questions in child language.

1. **Questions**

Children learning questions in a first language start out by producing questions without changing the internal structure of the sentence. With yes/no questions, for example, they produce questions as "You like dis ?" or "I have some ?" simply adding rising intonation to a sentence to indicate that it's a question. With wh-questions, they simply put the question word at the beginning of the sentence, for example "Why you caught it?" Gradually, children begin to notice that the structure of questions is different from declaratives, and they may begin to produce questions such as "Can I go?"or "is that mine?" But they may then generalize, incorrectly, that yes/no questions are formed by putting a verb at the beginning of the sentence, without changing the internal structure. This leads them to ask questions such as "Is the teddy is tired?" and "Do I can have a cookie?" "Do" is the most frequent element used in this way, but "is" and "can" or other auxiliaries are also found. Some youngsters even adopt whole chunks of a frequently heard question, such as "Do you have", and produce questions such as "Do you have you like ice cream?"

Later, children begin to master the use of the inversion with the auxiliary verb, including the addition of do in sentences in which no auxiliary is expressed, as in the adult system.

There is some evidence that at this stage, children can either invert subject and auxiliary verb or use a question word, but not do both. Therefore, we may find inversion in yes/no questions (e. g. , "Can he eat the cookie?") but not in wh-questions (e. g., "Where I can draw them?"

Later, the child is able to combine both operations and say for example, "Why can he go out?" However, it may still be beyond the child's ability to carry out a third or fourth operation, making it difficult for him to negate the question as well as invert it, for example, so he produces "Why he can't go out?"

There are some other things about question development which are very similar for all children. For example, I'm sure if you were asked which wh-question is the first one which children typically produce, you would probably all come up with some version of "Whatsat" — either whassat, whatsit, whaddis, or whatisdis ! These forms are first learned as a whole and it is some time before the child learns that there are variations of the form such as "What is that ?" and "What are these ?" The child soon learns also to ask where *and* who, *but* why, how *and* when *come somewhat later. Furthermore, as they learn to ask a greater variety of questions, children can only answer those questions that they can already ask. That is, children begin by answering* what, who *and* where *questions quite well, since this is the kind of information their own language can express — information about the here and now — about objects, people and places. However, they do not understand the concepts of manner, causation, purpose or time until later and therefore, often give wrong answers to some wh-questions. For example, if asked "When would you like to have lunch ?" a two-year-old child may reply "In the kitchen" or when asked "Why are you eating now?" a child might respond "an apple".*

Most children start to ask why *before* how *and* when *questions. Nevertheless, the* why *questions are the most complex for children to learn, not to say the most frustrating at times for adults to answer, as children go through what is often referred to as their «why phase». It seems that for the development of understanding of* why, *a child has to observe and participate in a large number of conversations that include* why *questions and answers before he knows when it is appropriate to ask why and what is considered to be an acceptable answer.*

But, what about children who are learning a second language ? Do they learn to form questions in a similar way ? Several studies have been carried out to investigate how natural *second language learners form questions, whether they go through similar stages and how these stages compare with children learning first languages. Three broad stages for both wh-questions and yes / no questions have been identified. As with the development of other systems, these stages overlap considerably.*

The first stage is identical to the initial stage in first language acquisition, in that learners form their questions without changing the internal structure of the sentence. With yes / no questions, they simply add rising intonation without changing the word order in the sentence as in "ou want to see this ?" and " I told you this?" With wh-questions, the question word is simply placed at the beginning of the sentence as in "Where she is going" and "How you do this?"

In the second stage of question development, just as with first language, the learner notices the pre-sentential element but doesn't understand where it comes from. He overgeneralizes and thinks that he can simply put a verbal element at the beginning of all Yes / No questions. Thus, he produces «Is the door is open or closed?" Fventually, the learner starts to invert subject and auxiliary but its use may not be consistent. It seems to occur first with "to be" and "can" but because learners have not yet fully mastered how to use these forms, they will say things like "Do you want this" on the one hand, and "Do you can write this?"on the other.

In the third stage, the use of inversion is more wide-spread and becomes regularized. However, learners will sometimes inflect the verb twice in forming questions saying things like "Where did he bought it" and "What does he says ?"

With second language learners learning to form questions in natural *settings, then, there appears to be a sequence of development which is typical of most learners, and the stages are similar in most respects to first language question development. there are also differences which seem to be due to influence of the mother-tongue as well as other individual factors. What is perhaps most striking however, is that even children whose first language has subject-auxiliary inversion for questions, go through a phase of using the declarative word order in forming questions in their second language*[1]

2. *Negatives*

Perhaps the first point to make about how children learn about negation in a language is just how quickly they understand and use the functions of negation. As we know, there are a number of different functions associated with the negative in English. For example, we can deny, reject, disagree with and refuse something by using the negative. Interestingly, children seem to be very sensitive to the various functions of the negative form at a very early stage and understand and use the fundamental aspects of negation right from the very start. However, even though they have this awareness of how negation functions, it takes some time before they have learned the grammatical rules to express the variety of negative functions.

It is probably not all that surprising to learn that the child's first negatives usually consist of the word no which is simply tagged onto a word or phrase, either at the beginning or at the end. Many of the earliest utterances of this type consist of a simple proposition plus a negative as in "No go". "No cookie" or "No sing a song" or even "No Mommy comb hair" when the child is running away from the hairbrush ! Some children adopt the word "any" as a negator, shaking their heads and saying "Any juice!".

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[1] *Even though written and formal spoken French has subject-auxiliary inversion for questions, children and adults in informal speech tend to use the declarative construction "Tu viens avec nous ?" "Pourquoi il a fait ça?" Thus when a French speaker learning English fails to use subject-auxiliary inversion, he may be transferring structures from his L1.*

The second stage that most children go through is when the negative element is inserted into a more complex sentence. At this stage, children may add forms of the negative other than no. For example, children may use don't or can't or won't. They usually begin to use these negative forms, in fact, before they use do or can or will. Furthermore, since they do not yet inflect these for different persons or tenses, they end up producing utterances like "He don't want it".

In the third stage of development children begin to produce the correct form of the verbs "do". "be" and modal verbs such as "can" to suit the person, number and tense. This enables them to produce sentences like "You can't have supper".

Children learning English as a second language in natural settings (i.e. without formal instruction) seem to go through similar stages of negation development. However, there are also some differences in this development which may be due to influences of their first language and other individual factors. Four stages have been identified in an attempt to describe the development of negation in natural second language learners' speech.

In the first stage, second language learners, like first language learners, typically place the negative element (usually no or not) before the verb or the element being negated. For example "No bicycle" or "no have any sand" or "I not like it". Some learners have a preference for no which may be related to transfer from their first language. Spanish speakers, for example, tend to use the no form most often since that corresponds with the negative form in Spanish. There is also some evidence that these negative elements are used differently by individual learners depending on the part of speech being qualified. For example, while some learners have been found to use not when a copula (the verb be) is required and no in other linguistic contexts, other learners have been found to use no consistently as a negative marker in all contexts at this particular stage.

In the second stage, no and not are dominated by don't. At this stage, don't is not marked for person, number or tense and it may even be used before modals like can and should. In fact, it seems at this stage, that some learners simply replace no and not with don't and produce sentences like "He don't like it" and "I don't can sing".

The next stage is one where learners begin to place the negative element after auxiliary verbs like are, is, can etc. This produces sentences like "You can't go there"and "He can't eat nothing". At this stage, the don't form is still not fully analysed.

In the final stage, however, do performs its full function as a marker of tense and person. So, learners can say things like "It doesn't work", and "We didn't have supper". For some time, however, learners may continue to mark tense on both the auxiliary and the verb producing sentences like "I didn't went there" and "She doesn't wants to go".

This division of learners' development into stages suggests a neatness and regularity which may be misleading. In reality, the stages are not so separate and learners may use a number of different forms at one point in time, a "stage" being identified by the emergence or increasing frequency of a particular form rather than by the absence of an earlier one. Nevertheless, the research evidence does suggest that second language learners in natural settings go through similar stages as they acquire the negative and that, to a large extent, these stages are similar to those which are observed in first language learning.

3. *Grammatical Morphemes*

Much research has focused on how children develop inflections and function words, for example, how they learn about putting an s inflection on the third singular in the simple present tense as in "She sings" or "He eats" or how they learn to use the article "a" or "he" or learn to put and "ed" on the past tense of regular verbs. These small grammatical markers are sometimes referred to as grammatical morphemes.

One of the best-known studies which investigated the development of grammatical morphemes in child first language development is one carried out by a psycholinguist named Roger Brown in the late 60's and early 70's. He studied how three children, Adam, Eve and Sarah, learned 14 of these morphemes over time. The morphemes which Brown studied include the following.

present progressive «-ing» (She is running)
plural "-s" (two books)
irregular past forms (She went)
possessive "s" (daddy's hat)
copula (yes, she is; she's a nice girl)
articles "he" and "a"
regular past "-ed" (She walked)
third person singular simple present "-s" (She runs)
auxiliary "be" (he's coming)

Of course, children do not master each of these morphemes suddenly, but gradually, over a period of time. Therefore, one of the problems with doing research such as this is deciding how to determine that a particular morpheme has in fact been "acquired". Brown used the "Obligatory Context" criterion.That is, he decided that if a child produced the correct morpheme in 90% of the contexts where it was required, he would consider this morpheme to be acquired. Using this criterion, he found that the three children studied acquired the 14 morphemes he studied in a remarkably similar sequence. Among the first morphemes to be mastered by the children were the progressive "-ing" and plural "-s"; the latest were the third person singular "-", and the auxiliary "be". Furthermore, a child who had mastered the grammatical morphemes at the bottom of the list was sure to have mastered those at the top of the list, but the reverse was not true. Thus, Brown could claim there was evidence for a sequence or order of acquisition. The children mastered the morphemes at different rates, however. For example, Eve had mastered nearly all the morphemes before she was two years old while Sarah was nearly four before she reached the same level.

Brown's study involved only three children and took years to complete because he had to wait for the children to develop the various grammatical morphemes. Some other researchers (Jill and Peter de Villiers) wanted to find out if Brown's order would be found in a larger number of children, but they wanted to do so in a way that would take less time. So they recorded the speech of children in a nursery school and then compared the children in terms of how many morphemes they used correctly in 90% of the contexts where they were required. They found that children who correctly used the morphemes which Adam and Eve and Sarah had acquired late (for example, the copula (she's tired) and the third person singular simple present (she plays) were also correct in using the ones which Adam, Eve and Sarah had acquired earlier (for example, the plurals and the progressive -ing), but those who accurately used the "early" morphemes had not necessarily mastered the "late" ones. The children mastered the morphemes at different ages — just as Adam and Eve and Sarah had done, but the order of their acquisition was very similar. These children were similar to each other and similar to Adam, Eve and Sarah.

The study carried out by Brown is called a longitudinal study. This means that he studied the same learners over a period of time. The deVilliers' study was a cross-sectional study, which means that they looked at a group of children who were at different ages and stages of development, and then they made an informed guess about what the sequence or order of acquisition was for an individual child.

The similarity between Brown's and the deVilliers' morpheme acquisition research suggested that cross-sectional studies of morpheme acquisition, which take much less time to complete, produce essentially the same results.

Several studies to examine the development of grammatical morphemes have been carried out with children who have learned English as a second language in a natural environment. For the most part, these studies have examined a smaller number of morphemes than the original Brown and deVilliers studies did and most have been cross-sectional in nature. The researchers took samples from a large number of learners at one point in time, scored each morpheme for accuracy in the learners' speech and came up with an «accuracy» order for the morphemes. These studies were done with learners of different ages and from different first language backgrounds.

The overall results of the studies revealed an order which, while not the same as that found in the first language studies, was similar among children from different first language backgrounds. This suggests that natural second language learners acquire grammatical morphemes in much the same way that first language learners do and that this natural sequence is not determined only or even mainly by the child's first language.

Although a review of all the «morpheme acquisition» studies suggests that the learner's first language has a more important influence on acquisition orders than some researchers have claimed, there are some very strong patterns of similarity which cannot be explained by transfer from the first language.

There are still some unanswered questions in the morpheme acquisition literature. Nonetheless, it does seem as if second language learners have a tendency to acquire a set of English morphemes in a certain order. Just how much variation in this order is due to mother-tongue influence, the situation in which the learner language is observed, and individual learner factors is something we will continue to discuss in this and the next module.

We can conclude this lecture by saying that there are indeed features of first language learner speech which develop in systematic and predictable ways. We have seen examples of this in the development of interrogation, negation and grammatical morphemes. Furthermore, it appears that second language development for learners in natural setting proceeds along similar lines. However, there is also evidence for some individual or group variation which we will continue to explore in this and the next module on language acquisition.

Core ESL in Quebec: What results can we expect?*

Every Canadian knows – either personally or through radio and television – adult francophone Quebecers who speak English. Some speak it much better than others, of course, but it does not surprise us when we encounter a francophone who speaks English. In the past, many of these individuals learned English at work or by attending English-language schools. The historical conditions under which many francophones learned English have changed dramatically; the increased use of French in public life in Quebec has diminished the likelihood that young francophones will have the need or the opportunity to learn English "on the job," and under the French Language Charter, francophone students no longer have the option of attending English-language schools. This has a very great importance as we consider the role ESL classes will play in the learning of English by francophone Quebecers. We need to take into account the real and perceived needs which francophone students have for ESL and the reasonable expectations we may have for meeting these needs in core ESL programs. Considering that French-language schools do not offer immersion programs, the maximum number of hours of instruction in English is 700 in the core program over eight years. What can be accomplished in these courses? What results can we expect?

It is perhaps best to begin by saying what we cannot expect: fluent bilinguals. There is nothing surprising about this really. Everything we know about second language acquisition tells us that it takes time. In contrast to core ESL, new Canadian immigrant children or anglophone in total French immersion receive over 1000 hours of exposure to their second language in one year. An extended or intensive period of exposure may not be a sufficient condition for the development of second language mastery, but it is a necessary one.

What *can* we expect, then? I would like to discuss what I believe to be the realistic expectations in terms of two objectives: the development of positive attitudes toward using and learning English and the development of language skills as such.

We can expect students to develop language skills – comprehension and production – which will prepare them to meet their own future needs for learning and using English. On an individual basis, these needs may range from survival communication skills for occasional trips to Nova Scotia or Alberta to reading textbooks in a computer science course or serving tourists in a shop on St. Catherine Street. ESL courses can prepare students for such a variety of needs by helping them develop tools for approaching the language: strategies for using what they *know* to help them interpret what they *don't* know, strategies for communicating meaning even when they don't know the exact word or phrase, strategies for asking the right question – of a text or a conversational partner – in order to get more pertinent information. I believe that the new "communication-based" programs developed by the Quebec ministère de l'Éducation are designed to prepare students in just this way. As noted in a previous issue of *Dialogue* (1982, 7 (1): 8), these new programs have been "designed to move away from the concept of learning as product-oriented to a process-oriented experience."

One of the important ways in which ESL courses can prepare students for such a great variety of needs is by exposing them to a variety of examples of authentic English. From the earliest weeks of ESL instruction in Grade 4 a student can read the list of ingredients on food product labels and understand contextualized instructions. Grade 6 students can follow spoken and written directions, play many language-based games, and understand weather reports. Secondary students can read a short story or a newspaper, understand television drama dialogue, and learn facts about geography, science, or history from reading selections from English books or magazines. Guided exposure to such authentic language builds students' confidence in their ability to handle "real English" and thus makes them more willing to take advantage of out-of-classroom opportunities to use and learn the language. It is this confidence-building which contributes to the development of positive attitudes toward using and learning English.

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* Lightbown, P.M. 1983. "Core ESL in Quebec: What results can we expect?". *DIALOGUE: A Newsletter on the Teaching of English and French as Second Languages.* Vol. 2, No. 1, The Council of Ministers of Education: Canada, November 1983, pp. 1,4,5,6.

If it seems that the emphasis is on comprehension rather than production skills, then I've made myself clear. There are, I believe, good reasons for emphasizing comprehension.

- Francophone Quebecers as a group will have far more occasions to use comprehension than production skills in English throughout their lives.

- Students tend to be able to overcome shyness and tension much better when they know the focus is on the message rather than the form of their response.

- The use of authentic material for comprehension activities has significant motivational value because it is possible to draw on a wide variety of interesting topics – something which is very difficult to do when you must stick to materials which are written "in simple sentences with only the present tense of verbs." For francophones, the existence of a very large number of French/English cognates makes it possible to understand quite advanced vocabulary at a relatively early stage in language learning. Yet surprisingly little pedagogical use has been made of this fact.

- Because many ESL core courses in Quebec are taught by francophones whose own pronunciation and grammar are not native-like, an emphasis on comprehension makes it possible to provide students with native-speaker/native-writer models through tape recording and printed texts. If students are exposed to carefully selected samples of spoken and written language produced by native speakers, they will have more opportunities to see and hear correct standard (though not necessarily *formal*) language on which they can eventually model their own production of English.

- Finally, and in fact most important, emphasis on comprehension allows the ESL teacher to make available more "comprehension input" to serve as the data for language acquisition. I refer here, of course, to Krashen's hypothesis that what is necessary and sufficient for language acquisition is exposure to comprehensible input in the target language, language which is comprehensible, but slightly beyond the level of the learner's own ability at that particular point in time – in a context where the learner is positively motivated to hear and understand. Like many teachers and researchers in the area of language acquisition, I tend to have some quarrel with Krashen regarding the role of formal instruction for language acquisition. I hope it is clear that I am not recommending a return either to pages of grammar-translation exercises and memorized rules or to rigid pattern practice. What I do mean is instruction which focusses on formal features of the language through brief grammatical explanation and exercises, vocabulary lessons, descriptions of particular syntactic patterns in the language, etc. Krashen sees formal instruction *about* the language as largely irrelevant to the development of real competence in the language. My own view is reconciled with Krashen's, perhaps, in that I see formal instruction as contributing to *making input comprehensible*. Thus, while exposure to comprehensible input may indeed be a sufficient condition for second language acquisition, I believe that appropriate formal instruction may aid acquisition by providing the learner with more "hooks" – more points of access to the meaning. I agree with Krashen entirely, however, that interesting comprehensible input is a *necessary* condition for second language acquisition.

Thus, in the new ESL core programs in Quebec, the emphasis will be – as it should be – on comprehension, and production skills will be oriented toward the development of information-getting skills: students need experience in asking questions, requesting clarification, explaining what information they require.

Many people – teachers, parents, students – will agree that core ESL programs in Quebec have not, in the past, been as successful as one might wish in the development of either ESL skills or positive attitudes toward using and learning English. The emphasis on the production of letter-perfect forms – through both the grammar-translation and audio-lingual periods – meant that students proceeded very slowly: English classes often seemed tedious and repetitive to good students, intimidating and discouraging to weaker ones. The orientation of the new programs toward communication-based activities where meaning is considered first and the polishing of form second, and where the emphasis is on comprehension and the fostering of positive attitudes, is more in line with current views of language learning and teaching. We should not of course pretend ourselves that this educational reform will be a panacea. We all know of the many pitfalls which lie in wait of the best-laid plans of curriculum-designers. One which comes quickly to mind is the possibility that adequate funds for re-educating (not just re-training) teachers may not be available. But such issues must be addressed elsewhere. Meanwhile we may permit ourselves to be optimistic about the future of core ESL – while we are at the same time realistic about what we can expect.

ESL: Time to Teach*

Patsy M. Lightbown , Concordia University

Time is a factor which affects many aspects of language teaching. In this paper, I will focus on two time-related questions:
(1) What is the best time to teach ESL in Quebec schools?
(2) Is enough time devoted to ESL teaching?

What is the best time to teach? I don't mean "Is Tuesday at 9:00 better than Friday at 2:30?" We all know the answer to that question. I'm referring to the question of the age of the learner. What is the best time in terms of the learner's development of his or her own language or of his or her cognitive maturity? The answer to this one is somewhat less obvious than the answer to the question about the time of day.

It is a widely held opinion that the younger the learner, the better the learning when it comes to language. And yet, there are two kinds of information which lead us to question this simple generalization. First, there is some research which suggests that beginning the teaching and learning of a second language too soon can lead to deficits in the first language and possibly to cognitive and educational deficits as well.

If you are persuaded by that argument, you should closely examine closely the research literature on which it is based. You will find that any reputable study which has found deficits which seem to be related to too-early second language learning have been carried out in contexts of children from disadvantaged minority language groups learning majority languages in circumstances which entail the replacement of their native language by the second language. A child comes to school and finds that the language he or she knows already does not permit him or her to follow the academic program. In order to do that, he or she must learn the school language. Thus, while he or she is learning the school language, the learning that takes place through that language is somewhat restricted. Meanwhile, the language he or she does know, his or her home language, is used less and less as he or she spends many hours in school. If he or she is a member of a disadvantaged minority group, his or her parents may be unable to supplement his or her learning of math or social studies at home. There may be few books and few sources of information about the subject matter of school available in the minority language . Sometimes the parents are convinced that it is in the child's best interests to forget the native language, or at least to use it only in very restricted settings. They may be trying their best to use the school language "for the child's own good", thus depriving the child of a fully developed

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* This is a slightly revised version of the paper presented as the closing pleanary address at the 1985 SPEAQ Convention in Montreal.

linguistic system for interaction either with his or her parents or with the school. It is this type of second language learning, which Wallace Lambert called "substractive bilingualism", which may lead to genuine delays in cognitive and academic development. Note that this is not really an argument for beginning second language instruction later. It is an argument for mother tongue maintenance — at home, if not at school.

The circumstances I have just described are those in which research has been interpreted to show both linguistic and cognitive deficits in children whose second language learning is begun too soon. Such deficits due to an early start have not generally been observed in the case of so-called French immersion, the Canadian educational innovation in which anglophone children begin their schooling in a setting where the teacher speaks only French to a group of children who, at the beginning, speak only English. The differences between this situation and the situation of the minority language child described above should be quite obvious. The anglophone in North America does not need to worry about the loss of his or her native language. And if he or she comes from a middle class family — as most children in immersion do — it can be expected that he or she will have opportunities to develop English literacy skills at home. Furthermore, one should not overlook the fact that immersion schooling is bilingual *education. Not only are most immersion classes housed in English schools, but the instructional program also includes a substantial English language component.*

What you will not *find in the research literature is any evidence that second language instruction of the formal type — where the teacher spends 15, 30 or even 60 minutes a day giving instruction in a second language while the rest is spent in the child's native language — has any negative effect whatsoever on the child's cognitive development, his or her academic progress, or the development of his or her mother tongue.*

Until you have reviewed the research literature yourself, don't let anyone persuade you that one can start too early with second language instruction if, by starting too early, they mean that a couple of hours a week of second language instruction is somehow harmful to the learner. There may be good reasons for avoiding very early ESL instruction in Quebec schools, but this is not one of them: one or two hours of ESL instruction per week will not harm children.

The second type of research challenging the "younger is better" view is that which looks strictly at success in learning the second language itself. In research on this question, there is growing evidence that, in classroom instructional settings, older children and adults progress much more rapidly than younger children through the early stages of second language development. In fact, some research suggests that even in informal settings, where language is learned strictly though use of the language in communicative contexts, adults and older children progress more *rapidly than young children. However, the evidence further suggests that unlike adult learners, the children who begin learning before the age of puberty can master the target language fully and completely — if the child has opportunities to be exposed to speakers of the language in all types of settings, that is, if he or she has good models of the language.*

Age is not sufficient as a predictor. For example, children in French immersion programs rarely reach complete native-like mastery of the language, not because they didn't start early enough, but apparently because they do not have a sufficiently rich range of models — especially peers — on whom to base their own language development.

I would like to suggest that there may be good reasons not to introduce ESL instruction before grade 4 or even later in the schools of Quebec. But as long as we are talking about formal ESL instruction rather than some type of immersion, those reasons will be reasons of pedagogical economy, of efficiency and effectiveness rather than reasons of threat to the native language and cognitive development of the child. I believe that students may learn more *if we* start later *and* intensify *the instruction, rather than starting early and providing a very thin diet of one or two hours a week of instruction. Of course there are other factors which limit the application of this principle. Adolescents may be potentially successful, but poorly motivated. Maximum efficiency in a vacuum might be served by making secondary three a compulsory immersion year, but there may be other reasons to recommend against such a plan. This is not to say that biologically or psycholinguistically or cognitively fourteen-year olds are not at a good age. Take the same youngers and move them to Vancouver and they would learn English in a hurry. But in a classroom, with their peers, their social order is disturbed by what they perceive as having to embarrass themselves by having to speak English in the presence of their friends.*

To sum up this discussion of the best time *to teach in terms of the child's development: There is evidence that children who are surrounded by a second language while they are still very young can reach full native-like mastery of the language. In instructional settings, however, the evidence suggests that older children and adolescents are more efficient, especially in the early stages of second language learning.*

The second question to be addressed in this paper is that of total time for language instruction: Is enough time devoted to ESL teaching ?

How many minutes of instruction do ESL students in Quebec get each week ? The Ministry says it should be 120 minutes per week in grades 4, 5, and 6; 150 minutes in the secondary school. How many students actually get that many minutes ? In its inquiry leading to its recent report, the Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation explored in detail the current status of ESL teaching. In the report, the Conseil chose to refrain from recommending the implementation of experimental intensive or extended ESL programs, and recommended instead that priority be given to ensuring that the currently mandated time allotments be implemented in the many school boards where less time was being scheduled — 100 minutes per week in some boards, 90 in others — even less in some. Even in schools where the full number of minutes is allotted, the fact that students or teachers often have to move from one classroom to another or retrieve books from cupboards or lockers often means that many minutes are lost. And of course, we're all familiar with the losses due to special events, announcements on the school public address loudspeakers, interruptions to distribute milk or fluoride treatments. It's probably accurate to say that there are few, if any, weeks in which all the scheduled minutes are actually devoted to teaching ESL.

Sometimes, in my courses at Concordia, I ask students what they consider to be the most serious impediment to successful ESL teaching. They almost always start by saying motivation and then we go on to brainstorm lots of other things. It surprises me that they hardly ever mention what seems to me to be the one thing which guarantees that classroom achievement in the second language will be limited: too little time. Too little time to hear the language; too few chances to try to use words or phrases students have heard. Too little time for the teacher to interact with each student; too little time for the teacher to find out who is still having trouble understanding and who is already bored.

It's interesting to calculate how much time it takes to learn a language. At various times I've calculated that the average child has had some 15,000 hours of exposure to his or her own native language by the time he or she starts school. And that's a very conservative estimate. Children who are enrolled in French immersion programs which start in kindergarten, use only French for instruction in grades 1 and 2, then gradually introduce English in grades 3, 4 and 5, will have had more than 3,000 hours of exposure to French before they enter grade 6. In Quebec, a student whose school devotes the maximum recommended time to ESL, from grade 4 right through secondary, would get about 700 hours — including the fluoride treatments !

I'm certainly not alone nor the first to call attention to the problem of too little time to teach. For example, there is an article by Merrill Swain in a 1981 issue of Language Learning called *Time and Timing in Bilingual Education*. Her primary concern in that article is with bilingual education — particularly with comparisons between voluntary French immersion for Canadian anglophones and imposed second language learning for immigrant and minority group children — the latter being the kind of educational experience referred to earlier as subtractive bilingualism. However, Swain also quotes from a number of studies and statements regarding the role of time in instructional second language programs, programs which do not lead to bilingual education or education through the target language, but rather aim at basic (communicative) competence in the target language. Some of those quotations are worth repeating.

For example, in 1975, John Carroll, reporting on a huge international investigation of second language teaching of French in eight countries concluded that the data of *the ... study suggest that the primary factor in the attainment of proficiency in French ... is the amount of instructional time provided (p. 276 — quoted by Swain 1981, p.2).*

Similarly, from a 1977 document from the Ontario Ministry of Education, Swain quotes the following.

> *Organizationally, it is considered that the key factor is the number of hours of instruction in French, or in subjects using French as the language of communication. In other words, the more hours a pupil spends in French, the higher (the) level of achievement is likely to be.*

The document further sets out funding guidelines for Ontario schools.

> *The new grant plan is based on the idea that the more instructional time a pupil received in French, the greater the likelihood of achieving a facility with the language. Generally speaking, the more hours of French instruction accumulated by a pupil through his or her school board (pp. 8 & 11 of document, quoted by Swain 1981, p. 3).*

Swain then discusses the research in French immersion education which shows that there are probably limits to the notion that if more hours are good, lots more hours will be even better, regardless of how the hours are used or distributed. Recent research by Swain and her colleagues in Ontario, by Fred Genesee and his colleagues in Montreal, as well as others, has tended to show that late immersion students who began their immersion program in grade 7 at age 12 had, in terms of many test scores, proficiency in French at the end of grade 8 which was similar to the proficiency of a comparison group in grade 8 who had been in French immersion from kindergarten. The early immersion pupils had accumulated 4,000 hours of exposure to French; those from the late immersion program had accumulated 1,400 hours. And yet the learners who had started later and had only one-third as many hours, equalled or surpassed the early immersion students on several measures. The early immersion students were superior only on the listening comprehension test.

These results from French immersion reinforce the discussion in the first part of the paper, suggesting that older learners may develop more rapidly at the early stages of second language learning. As mentioned above, it should be noted that the one advantage which most researchers attribute to younger learners, namely, the long-term ability to develop native-like mastery including native-like pronunciation, does not accrue to children in immersion — presumably because they do not have sufficient contact with native speakers of the target language, especially peers with whom to speak the language in a variety of non-instructional settings.

I do not believe the immersion results I've just described represent an iron-clad case for late immersion as superior to early immersion.There are reasons beyond test results which may make early immersion preferable. The point is simply that *accumulated hours cannot suffice as an accurate predictor of language mastery when total exposure is very great. The results also suggest that intensive contact with the language may be more effective than that which is spread out over many years in smaller quantities.*

Of course, in Quebec — particularly in the public school system — we are very far indeed from overdosing our students with ESL ! Our problem clearly lies at the other end of the scale: very limited time to teach. What should we do about that ? I'd like to suggest two responses: (1) make the best use of the time you have and (2) try to get more time — and make the best use of that time as well.

What do I mean by make the best use of the time you have to teach ESL? You should perhaps begin by acknowledging that your objective cannot be to develop balanced bilinguals whose second language skills are equivalent to their first language skills. Your reasonable objective has to be to prepare students to benefit from opportunities to use the language outside of class. This is true whatever the program you are teaching in. Even if you are teaching in a program for adults who also get considerable exposure to the language outside the classroom, there is evidence that teaching programs can be effective in helping learners increase their proficiency (see Mike Long's article in the TESOL Quarterly in 1983). They do this in part by helping learners to make better use of their out-of-class exposure.

Whatever kind of program we're in — elementary or secondary school, regular or intensive programs, adult education, CEGEP programs, university ESL—our long-term objective is usually to prepare students to use the language they're learning when they encounter it outside the classroom. More and more, course objectives are no longer written in terms of the mastery of the past perfect at the end of level 6, but rather in terms of what students are expected to be able to use the language for. But our desire to have students prepared to use the language outside the classroom goes beyond our perfectly reasonable concern that they see the language as a means to a functional or communicative end such as ordering food in a restaurant or asking for directions. These communicative ends turn out to be means to another end, namely more language learning. Using the language outside the classroom walls provides more input, more opportunity to practise, real-world motivation.

For those who are teaching in areas remote from English-speaking populations: don't think I'm not talking about your students. Outside the classroom includes watching television; reading English comics, newspapers, or books; English while on vacation; pen-pals; and opportunities for exchange programs. Communicative use of English shouldn't be understood as referring only to face-to-face conversations. It can include face to book — or face to TV screen ! But these things don't just happen. Students can only benefit (in terms of language learning) from watching television, for example, if they have reached a fairly high level of proficiency or if they have been well prepared to watch with a purpose. Exchange programs require great effort and planning, but the payoff is worth it, as Denise Lussier and her colleagues and the SEVEC program have convincingly shown.

All these remarks about out-of-class activities may make you think I've forgotten that my question here was: How do we make the best use of our time to teach? But I haven't forgotten. What I'm saying is, we make the best use of our class time when we prepare students to continue learning outside the classroom. In a sense, that was one of the most serious problems with the lock-step audio-lingual programs. Teachers — and eventually students — were convinced that they had to proceed through the language in a straight line, that any deviation would interfere withthe goal of the program. For this reason, students were not encouraged to try to use the language outside the class and students who knew the language better than others because they had had previous experience with the language were often considered to be problems — disrupting the step-by-step progress toward mastery.

Our current understanding of language acquisition suggests that the principles of such lock-step learning were based on an idealized view of language learning which does not correspond to reality. Over the past few years, a number of researchers have shown that Corder's hypothesis that learners have a built-in syllabus has some considerable validity. Don't misunderstand me — I'm not saying that we know what that built-in syllabus is or that, knowing it, we could in very precise ways hurry learners along it by teaching specifically according to this syllabus. What I want to emphasize is that making the best use fo class time means teaching the learner to use out-of-class opportunities and giving him or her experiences in class which build his or her confidence in his or her ability to use the language outside.

I said I had two responses to the problem of having too little time to teach. The first — making the best use of the time you have — is the one which probably fits best with most teachers, most classes and schools. But I'd like to make a few remarks about the other response: try to get more time and make the best use of that time as well. I'd like to focus on the situation in Quebec schools. Outside this context, the question of more time is at least partly at the discretion of students, who can take a longer or more intensive course — as long as they are willing or able to pay the extra fees, or take the time off from work. School students don't have that choice.

Several school boards have taken the initiative in getting more time to teach ESL. The fine panel discussion on alternatives to the drip-feed approach included presentations of a variety of alternatives which are being implemented in a number of school boards. In some cases, the total time is actually being increased very little, but it is being rearranged — sometimes dramatically, as when all ESL instruction is compressed into an intensive five-month period in grade 6; sometimes only moderately, as when grade 4 instruction is eliminated in order to increase the amount of instructional time offered in grades 5 and 6. So far, there has not been too much in*

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* This panel discussion was organised for SPEAQ 1985 by Palmer Acheson of the TESL Centre at Concordia University. Presentations were made by Iolanda Bolduc (Greenfield Park School Commission), Ghislaine Côté-Provost (Jacques Cartier School Commission), Francine Hunt (Mille Isles School Commission), and Hans Tibblin (Baldwin Cartier School Commission).

the way of formal evaluation of these programs. But observation of some of the classes, as well as discussions with parents, students and teachers, suggests that the level of satisfaction is very high. A number of additional school boards are looking at the possibility of similar programs for next year. One result which is clear from these programs — even the most intensive — is that they have not taken anything away from the ESL learners' academic development in the other subject matter.

Another way to get more time is to persuade the educational authorities that teaching some subject matter courses through the medium of English could be very effective. One may agree that courses such as Canadian history or Quebec history are best taught through French. But some courses seem particularly well suited to second language medium instruction — physical education, art, even math or science for a year or two. This approach has been very successful in the so-called extended French programs in English schools, particularly in other provinces, and the fact that it is not currently acceptable for ESL teaching in Quebec does not mean that we should forget about it. It has much to recommend it — especially for secondary level. Note that there is no evidence that such a procedure threatens the child's overall academic achievement.

Last year at the congress of the International Association of Applied Linguistics in Brussels, I heard a fascinating paper by Alan Davies from the University of Edinburgh. When Professor Davies was in Canada earlier this year, I asked him to present some of the same information at Concordia. The paper was a report on research he and his colleagues had carried out in Nepal. They had been invited to Nepal to look into the possibility of beginning English language instruction in Nepali schools in grade one rather than in grade 5 as is the current practice. Many parents and some educators felt that this would lead to better English language achievement. The investigation revealed, however, that there were simply not enough trained teachers with good English language skills to make such and early start feasible — much less desirable. In fact, the research team concluded that the very best course, from the point of view of efficiency and pedagogical effectiveness, would be to delay English teaching until early secondary school, thereby permitting the Ministry of Education to use fully qualified English teachers for all classes rather than having most classes taught by poorly trained or low proficiency teachers. However, such a proposal would have been unacceptable to parents and educational authorities for political reasons. Thus, the final recommendation was to continue to introduce English instruction in late elementary classes — a compromise which at least prevented what would clearly have been a very poor use of pedagogical resources — and students' and teachers' time.

We are far removed, both geographically and culturally, from Nepal. But I think there are parallels to be drawn with the Quebec context. Spreading out ESL teaching over the years in small doses, often administered by teachers who are not prepared to teach ESL and who would prefer to be doing something else, is likely to be less *effective than concentrating the teaching in larger blocks of time where it can be taught by teachers with the background and the inclination for teaching English.*

To conclude, what I have tried to emphasize is that we simply do not have enough time allotted to ESL teaching in Quebec, and that our response to that should be (1) to make the best use of the time we have by preparing students to benefit from out-of-class experiences, and (2) to try to get more time — not by starting earlier, say in grade 3 or 2 or 1, but by intensifying instruction in the later years.

Of course time is not enough. Poor teaching done twice as long may achieve results no different from those achieved in less time. Time is not enough, but enough time is an essential component of successful second language teaching and learning.

If you would like a bibliography of works referred to in this paper as well as other articles related to the question of time and second language teaching, please write to the author: P. M. Lightbown, Director, TESL Centre, 1455 de Maisonneuve West, Montreal, H3G 1M8.

Research in Second Language Acquisition: What Can Teachers Use?

Twenty years ago I was a teacher of French as a foreign language in an American high school I had just received a masters degree in teaching French from a prestigious university where I had studied French literature, language and culture and had been trained by a well-known expert in foreign language teaching to teach according to what was then confidently referred to as the scientific approach. My training had been thorough and I had been a conscientious student so that by the time I faced my first class I could lead pattern practice and substitution drills with military precision. I knew how to avoid letting any student hear anything that didn't fit the orderly progression of vocabulary and structures to be learned. I could avoid situations in which they might attempt to say anything that had not been carefully presented and practised. I corrected every error and had students repeat the correct sentence several times to erase any potentially habit-forming experiences with anything other than perfect complete sentences.

I had learned all manner of mimicry so that, except for a global translation of the introductory dialogue in each unit, I could give students some understanding of what they were saying without ever using a word of their native language — which was also mine. I filled my classroom with posters of Mont St-Michel and Notre-Dame de Paris and baked a bûche de Noël at Christmas. I worked very hard and can remember being so tired that I would put my head on my desk at the end of the day and fall asleep. In the eyes of my department chairman I was a great success. And there's no doubt I was doing what I'd been taught to do, but I was filled with doubts about the effectiveness or even the appropriateness of what I was doing.

I was a young and idealistic teacher. In the 1960s that meant, among other things, that I had a very well-developed sense of social responsibility and a conviction that the kids from disadvantaged backgrounds had as much right to educational opportunities as those from more favored backgrounds. I did have the opportunity to teach one class — on an experimental basis — of kids who had not performed well in their previous academic work. Interestingly, it was considered inappropriate for me to use with them the same materials I used with the more academically successful students. (For those familiar with the best-known materials for foreign language teaching at that time, it was suggested that, instead of the audio lingual materials I was using with my academic students, I should use Voix et images de France. *The essential difference was that the A - L materials consisted of books with page after page of dialogues, pattern practice, and drills, while the* Voix et images *materials used pictures — filmstrips — to illustrate the dialogues.*

Paper presented as the opening keynote address for TESL. Nova Scotia, Halifax, May 22, 1987.

Meanwhile, I was aware that in another part of the huge city school where I was teaching, another teacher had something called an ESL class in which she was working with immigrant and minority group kids. Clearly, these kids were expected to learn English — and pretty quick at that — so that they could get on with their education. Why, I wondered, was it assumed that these kids who, no doubt, came from all sorts of backgrounds — mostly disadvantaged — and had a wide variety of intellectual ability and academic experience, were believed able to learn English when my one class of non-academic students had been so hard to get and, I feared by now, probably weren't going to learn much French after all.

On the other hand, I had also begun to worry about my academic students. I felt frustrated because — again, young and idealistic — I wanted to get to know them and I wanted them to like me and see me as a friend, someone they could feel at ease with. But that was hard when, during class time, our interactions were controlled by the necessity of practicing what Steve Krashen later referred to as the structure of the day. If the structure of the day was negative sentences, then the students had to forget the early-morning line-up outside the family bathroom when I asked if they had brothers or sisters. The correct answer in that case was only Je n'ai pas de frères or Je n'ai pas de soeurs .

I think the final blow to my confidence in my teaching method came one afternoon following a class in which the structure of the day had required students to answer my textbook questions about their hypothetical fathers, hypothetical professions. In this case the correct answers included Il est avocat or Mon père est professeur, etc. After school, one very sweet 14-year-old boy came to ask me if it were possible in tomorrow's class to avoid asking his friend Carl to answer that question because, well, Carl's father had died last summer and it was difficult for him and … It did no good for me to tell myself that those sentences, those questions and answers were just practice, that the really important thing was that, in French, we don't use an indefinite article in a copular sentence identifying someone's profession. I knew that what really mattered was that language form in an isolated classroom context, people's real lives were ever present and couldn't be suspended for the 45-minute period of my French class.

> *If I had stayed on in that high school, I think I would have changed my way of teaching, and it is clear that the communicative approach to language teaching which began in the 1970s to erode the dominance of the audio lingual approach would have helped me to cope with my feelings about teaching meaningful language rather than language form. My career path took a different turn, but that experience of teaching according to the scientific approach left a lasting impression: that teachers must never let themselves be persuaded by a scientific approach which is incompatible with their experience and intuition. Don't misunderstand. I am not saying that teachers should not listen to researchers or that they would allow themselves to get into a rut of doing things this way or that simply because they did it that way last year or*

because they've already got ditto masters with all those exercises on them. What I would say instead is that teachers should listen to new ideas based on research or new teaching approaches, seek to understand their general significance for them and their students, give the new ideas a fair trial, and then make a reasoned decision about how they will work in their own individual situations.

If you will forgive me for returning for a few minutes to what was beginning to sound like my autobiography, I would like to say a bit more about how I have come to this conviction. When I left that city high school, I decided I should teach ESL to immigrant and minority students rather than to continue teaching French to an academic elite, feeling that I needed to do something really important and I was sure that the need for these kids to learn English was indeed crucial to their economic survival. Because I couldn't get a teaching job right away when I moved from one city to another, I began taking graduate courses again at Columbia University Teachers college, thinking of preparing to move into ESL teaching. In one of my courses that year, Professor Lois Bloom gave a lecture on children's language acquisition. During that lecture, it became clear to me that my scientific approach to language teaching was based on a theory of how languages are learned that had been strongly challenged in research on child language. At that time, there was not yet a research area known as second language acquisition research, but I knew after I heard that lecture that it was absolutely essential for me to know more about how languages are learned before I was ready to venture out again to try to teach a language. Thus began several years of research in child language—first language acquisition. And, during that same period, the field of second language acquisition research developed very rapidly. When I began teaching a course called Language Acquisition in a teacher training program for ESL teachers at Concordia University in 1974, I was sure that the courses I taught would open the eyes of the teachers and future teachers who were my students to such obvious truths as errors are a natural part of language learning and as such should not cause alarm and imitation and practice are not the cornerstones of language acquisition and not all errors in L2 learners' speech are caused by L1 interference or there are developmental stages in L2 acquisition. My students were polite and some were even fascinated by the things they learned about how children learn their native language and how Spanish-speaking children and adults in Los Angeles and New York learned English as a second language. But most of my students taught or planned to teach francophone adolescents in Quebec, students who had little contact with English outside school. They were sure that what I was telling them had little to do with that.

My response to that was to undertake a research project in Québec schools which enabled me to compare the language acquisition of these learners with that of learners from other language backgrounds and other learning situations and to observe that many of the same processes seemed to be operating in all types of language acquisition.

In the past few years I have drawn together results from my own research and that of others in a couple of articles and I would like to summarize the main point of those articles briefly.

In the first, titled Great Expectations: Second Language Acquisition Research and Classroom Teaching (and sub-titled by a friend What the Dickens does second language research have to do with second language teaching ?), I listed ten generalizations which I considered to have been supported by SLA research over the past twenty years and which appear to me to have significance for second language teachers. Perhaps some of you have read that article in Applied Linguistics, but I'd like to review those generalizations and comment on what I think they mean for ESL teachers.

1. **Adults and adolescents can acquire a second language**

In making the distinction between acquisition and learning Krashen challenged the way some people thought of post-puberty second language learners. There is a great deal of research on how age affects success in language learning. The point here is simply that, while older learners have developed much knowledge and many skills which younger ones do not have, they have not lost the most remarkable of children's capacities: the ability to discover the underlying structure of an unknown language through opportunities to use that language in meaningful communication — even in the absence of an instructional program which breaks it down for them into learnable chunks. What adults have that children don't have — or can use much less effectively — is the ability to learn language, that is, to effortfully and intentionally study the language — its rules, its systems, its word formation patterns. It is crucial to be aware of two points in this area, however. First, not all adults are able to use this metalinguistic ability very well. There are dramatic differences in aptitude for this kind of language learning and those without formal knowledge of their own language can benefit little from formal — metalinguistic — instruction in their second language. And second, there remains an important controversy regarding how the formal or learned knowledge is related to the informal or acquired knowledge. And this leads to another observation.

2. **Knowing a language rule does not mean one will be able to use it in interactive communication**

What I find most fascinating about this is the fact that the easiest rules to learn — the ones that are neatly-packaged simple statements that we teachers love — are sometimes quite difficult to acquire, that is, to integrate into spontaneous language use. An example I'm especially fond of is the English noun possessive. For French-speaking learners of English, this form is missing in both the speech and writing of even quite advanced learners. And yet, many of them are quite capable of stating the rule which they may have learned years earlier.

The other side of this generalization, of course, is that the fact that on uses a language rule correctly does not mean that one will be able to state it. This is the case for most of us in our first language.

We know very little about how we discover or internalize the rules of our native language or of a second language, but there is enough evidence about one myth now that permits me to make a third generalization drawn from language acquisition research.

3. Practice does *not* make perfect

I must quickly explain what I mean by practice. It is clear that I would include all those miserable drills I did with my high school students of French twenty years ago. But it is not only that. Even in the most natural type of language acquisition — children's first language development — this phenomenon exists. It's so well-documented now that there is a bit of jargon to refer to it. It's called U-shaped development. The name comes from what a line graph tracing the learner's accuracy on a particular structure might look like. For a certain period, accuracy is high. Then, sometimes very suddenly, it drops off dramatically. After a period of low accuracy on this form, accuracy returns to a high level again — often just as suddenly, but sometimes very gradually. What this usually means is that, having practised or used the structure in a limited number of contexts, the learner encounters and begins to acquire a related structure. The integration of the related structure interferes with the correct performance on the structure the learner previously used. A good example of this is the period when learners are mastering the subject-auxiliary inversion in English questions. Learners who had been producing correct sentences with embedded clauses, e.g., I don't know how they can do that begin producing sentences like I don't know how can they do that. Gradually the correct form will be reestablished as the relationship between question forms and embedded sentences is discovered.

The reason for this U-shaped development phenomenon is simply that language is a complex hierarchical entity and, contrary to the scientific approach by which I was trained to teach, it is not possible to teach it in a linear, cumulative manner, assuming that each newly learned structure can simply be added on to the ones learned before. Related to this are the next two generalizations.

4. The learner creates a systematic interlanguage which is often characterized by the same systematic errors as those made by a child learning the same language as the first language. Learners also make errors which appear to be based on the transfer of rules of expectations from their first language.

5. There are predictable sequences in acquisition such that certain structures have to be acquired before others can be integrated.

What these generalizations mean is that second language learners cannot acquire what they are not ready to acquire even though they may be able to learn certain structures and use them in a limited number of appropriate contexts. Twenty years ago Corder hypothesized that learners had a built-in syllabus. He further hypothesized that the input which learners received — in the classroom or elsewhere — would be filtered through this internal mechanism which would determine the intake, that is, what learners were actually able to incorporate and use in their developing interlanguage systems.

One of the most controversial issues in this area is the role of the learner's first language in determining the interlanguage system in general and sequences of acquisition in particular. Fortunately, second language acquisition research has moved beyond the debates of a few years ago in which theorists argued either that L1 influence explained almost every aspect of L2 learners' behavior or that L1 influence explained nothing, to a more balanced position in which the influence of L1 is investigated rather than assumed. The results of recent research show that L1 influence is systematic and, to some extent, predictable according to the structural relationships between the L1 and L2.

The power of learners' systematic interlanguage and the existence of apparently inalterable acquisition sequences leads naturally to the next generalization.

6. Isolated explicit error correction is usually ineffective in changing language behavior

Over the years of observing second language classrooms, I've become grateful that this is so. Error correction in classrooms is astonishingly poor. Teachers think a learner is saying one thing when he or she means another, so the correction offered does not actually apply to the learner's intended utterance. Furthermore, if allowed to speak somewhat freely, as learners in communicative classrooms now do, learners make so many errors that the teacher could never catch them all without constantly stopping the interaction and exchange of messages. In any case, it must be remembered that errors may represent a lack of attention — in which case the correction is irrelevant as it tells the learner what he or she already knows. On the other hand, errors may represent an underlying system, in which case the system will require a restructuring, something which will take more time and more exposure than the unreliable occasional specific explicit error corrections can offer.

Of course, this restructuring may never occur, and this leads to the next generalization.

7. For most adult learner, acquisition stops — fossilizes — before the learner has achieved native-like mastery of the target language

The reasons for this may well be neurological. Adults may simply be unable to go beyond a certain level of mastery. On the other hand, some observers argue that the reasons are more socio-affective: adults reach a level at which they are able to communicate successfully and, as they do not feel the need or desire to become indistinguishable members of the target language community, they simply stop developing. What is curious and complicated, however, is the fact that certain aspects of the target language system seem more subject to fossilization than others and that some learners go so much further toward the target language than others. Nevertheless, once this fossilization occurs, continued exposure to the language does not seem to penetrate the learner's system and further instruction may lead to more knowledge about the language without changing the patterns in the learner's communicative language use.

With regard to fossilization, an interesting area for future research is the case of children who, in spite of their age and in spite of intensive and extensive exposure to the second language, still fail to reach native-like mastery of the language. This incomplete mastery is regularly observed in children in French immersion programs, where a number of explanations may be offered: students may reinforce each others' errors; personal and group identity of these majority language children may make them choose — at some level of consciousness — to maintain their distinctive non-native interlanguage; the fact that their imperfect language is always understood and accepted by peers and teachers may remove any incentive to change.

More puzzling is the immigrant or minority child who, in spite of long exposure and a clear desire to be accepted by the majority group, remains unable to master the second language. The pervailing mythology about children's magical abilities to acquire a second language rapidly and perfectly has tended to obscure these children. Jim Cummins of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education has argued that it takes some children several years (he says 5 to 7) to reach age-appropriate command of the target language in settings requiring both linguistic and cognitive sophistication. There may also be children, however, whose target language difficulties mask the fact that they also have some difficulty in their native language development. The absence of adequate tools for assessing immigrant and minority children's abilities in their L1 represents a serious impediment to our understanding and helping the unsuccessful child L2 learner.

Even for the most gifted second language learner, there is another generalization related to this.

8. One cannot achieve native-like (or near native-like) command of a second language in one hour a day

For those who teach in a foreign language situation where contact with the language occurs only in brief class periods of formal instruction, this is all too obvious. It takes thousands of hours — even under the best conditions — to learn a language. Where *learners' contact with the language is limited or where the contact is with language at too great a level of difficulty, development will be very slow.*

Two more generalizations remain on my list.

9. A learner's ability to understand language in a meaningful context exceeds his/her ability to comprehend decontextualized language and to produce language of comparable complexity and accuracy

It's essential to underscore the importance of context in saying that learners understand more than they can produce. Research to date has not revealed how comprehension and production are related at the level of syntax and morphology. The fact that a learner understands complex language in a particular situation does not mean he or she would understand the same sentences in a different situation or even in the same context if there were time pressure, ambient noise, or the necessity to attend to some other information at the same time.

Finally, the last generalization.

10. The learner's task is enormous because language is enormously complex.

What we must always remember is that we could never teach learners everything they need to know about the language they are learning. To speak and understand a language at a native-or near native-speaker level, one must have unconscious knowledge of rules not made explicit in the most thorough linguistic analyses of the language, much less in a second language textbook.

When we think of our responsibility as language teachers we must keep in mind that, as John Macnamara said in an article first published twenty years ago, The extent to which we cannot formulate a language is the extent to which our learning of it cannot be formal, and this is to a very great extent. (Macnamara, 1973, p. 61)

The title of this talk is Second Language Acquisition Research: What Can Teachers Use? I began by suggesting that teachers had good reason to be sceptical of a so-called scientific approach; and yet I went on to say that I had gotten involved in second language acquisition research because I believed it was important to know more about how languages are learned if one intends to find better ways to teach languages.

It's fair, I think, to point out that the scientific approach for which I was trained in the 1960s was based on the psychological theory of behaviorism, the linguistic theory of structuralism, and considerable experience with this teaching approach with small groups of highly motivated military, diplomatic, and intelligence personnel in intensive (6 to 8-hour a day) programs in residential schools. In other words, that *particular scientific approach was not based on second language acquisition research at all and certainly had no basis in what I would call ordinary language teaching contexts. What is the relationship between recent research and second language teaching? What do the generalizations just outlined mean for teachers?*

In a paper which appeared in the special issue of TESL Canada Journal, *I suggested that recent research is consistent with five roles for the second language teacher.*

(1) Teachers should provide learners with comprehensible input from their own speech as well as from other learners and from written materials and recorded material.

Those of you familiar with Steve Krashen's theory of second language acquisition know that, in Krashen's view, this is all *learners need. Although this comprehensible input hypotheses is by no means as simplistic as some critics suggest, I believe that the current state of research shows only that exposure to comprehensible input is necessary. Research has not — at least not yet — supported his hypotheses that it is sufficient. Nevertheless, supplying comprehensible input in an environment in which learners are motivated to pay attention to the content of what they hear or read is the teacher's first responsibility. If this requirement is not met, nothing else the teacher does will compensate for its absence, but the next role of the teacher is very closely related and virtually as important as the first.*

(2) Teachers should prepare learners, through the selection of appropriate tasks, to cope with the language outside the classroom.

This implies that at least some of the language which learners encounter in the classroom should be authentic language. But this is not inconsistent with the provision of comprehensible input. Language can be made comprehensible to learners either by simplification of the language addressed to them, or by contextualization of the language, or by the provision of strategies which learners can use to break through complex language and discover what they do understand. This gives learners the experience of coping with difficult language and strategies for coping which, in turn, give them the confidence to try to use and understand the language outside the classroom, thus increasing their opportunities for more comprehensible input. The teacher's third role follows directly from this.

(3) Teachers should provide access to reference and resource materials so students can find their own answers to questions about how to say something, what something means, how to spell something or, even, what the grammatical rule for something is.

And students should learn, through experience, how to use such materials. Obviously, this adds to the learners' independence and, once again, expands comprehensible input.

(4) Teachers should provide focussed instruction on some areas of recurring difficulty in language or language use. These areas may be identified through the teacher's own observation or pedagogical intuitions or through familiarity with SLA research, contrastive analysis, or linguistic descriptions of the target language.

Having provided such instruction, however, the teacher should not require or even expect that learners will begin to use what they have been taught in spontaneous speech. What the instruction can provide is very much like what the dictionaries and reference books provide — points of reference the learner can call on when there's time and motivation to do so. At a certain point in the learner's development, these points of reference can provide precisely the required input to push the learner's language forward. And some so-called good language learners are able to call on this kind of knowledge quite successfully even in communicative settings.

(5) Teachers should provide negative feedback and correction

(a) when learners request it,
(b) when an error is persistent and the learner seems not to realize this, or
(c) when the teacher knows — from his or her own experience or familiarity with research — that the particular error is one which is often fossilized by learners with this background.

For this one I have a confession to make: As far as I know there is no research evidence to support the usefulness of such corrective feedback. In fact, in the most successful contexts for language learning, we know that there is little such feedback: (1) in child language, parents correct children for content not form; (2) outside classrooms, learners rarely receive corrective feedback; (3) in immersion classes, teachers correct a very small percentage of errors in form, but do tend to correct errors in content. Furthermore, as we have said, systematic errors represent an underlying system which will change only when the system is restructured; and some errors are fossilized and appear impervious to change except under a limited set of focus on form conditions.

Nevertheless, those of you who work with adults know that many of them find communicative approaches to second language teaching frustrating because they believe that correction will help and that the teacher who never corrects is not doing his or her job. Thus, providing feedback is partly a matter of maintaining one's credibility as a teacher. Another reason for providing feedback of a type not available to non-instructed learners is that those best contexts for L2 acquisition are also contexts where learners receive thousands of hours of contact with the language.

What is important is to limit correction to those errors which are within the limits of a learner's current level of language development. It makes no sense to correct errors in inflectional morphemes if basic syntax has not been established.

What all this comes down to is this: second language learners are ultimately responsible for their own learning. Current research makes it clear that the learner has far more to learn than the teacher can teach and that certain developmental patterns of learning are not affected by teaching practice. The most dramatic evidence for this has been offered by Manfred Pienemann, based on his research on the learning of German as a foreign language. What teachers provide is opportunities, strategies, feedback, some rules of thumb and lots of encouragement. But unless the learner develops an independent motivation and expands this learning beyond the classroom, second language acquisition will remain incomplete.

Second language acquisition research: What can teachers use? Perhaps they can use the reassurance that comes from knowing that if they are leading their students toward independence in language learning, they're doing something right.

* * *

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